Week ending November 30 1957
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The confidence trick that fooled Britain

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IN THIS ISSUE

Stories

STORM *by Brian Cleeve* 9

THE SORT OF MAN A GIRL FALLS FOR *by Breton Amis* 16

A WOMAN OF SENTIMENT *by Elspeth Huxley* 22

Articles

ANGEL IN A PLASTIC BAG *by Norman Phillips* 14

THE WIDE BOYS WHO HAD THE NORTH ON A STRING *by W. E. Armstrong* 19

FIGHTING FOR THE MOTORIST'S MONEY *by Anthony Hancox* 24

Serials

THE OFFICE OF SECRET WAR (Part 2) *by Colonel Maurice Buckmaster* 12

GREEK FIRE (Part 5) *by Winston Graham* 25

Features

FREE SPEECH: 4, 6. THE COVER: 6. A MEAL TO REMEMBER: 26. JOKES: 27, 28, 33, 34, 37, 38. PRAISE: 27, 32, 34, 37, 42. HEAVEN'S IMAGE: 30. WHY?: 41.

REPORT FROM THE EDITOR

Harry Hants and his wife Joan; she is a keen potter

WHEN he saw the proofs of Elspeth Huxley's farming story, *A Woman Of Sentiment*, which begins on page 22, Harry Hants, the artist who illustrates the story, appraised it with a professional eye. During the last war he worked on farms for four years as ploughman, milkman and cowman —"the hardest four years of my life," he says. Hants's agricultural experience ranges from hedging and ditching in the middle of Dartmoor in January—which he thinks was probably only slightly more acceptable than being inside the prison—to being the man on a hay rake behind a runaway horse, which eventually charged into a tree and flung him through the air to land miraculously unhurt.

After the war the Hants family, which now includes John (sixteen), Ruth (eleven) and Lois (nine) moved into their four-bedroomed house at Wimbledon. In his studio, converted from the attic and barred to the rest of the family, Hants works each day from ten till six. "I'm a methodical type," he says. "I find that I can get the work done only by sticking to office hours."

Success came to him slowly. "For years I wandered round trying to sell pictures," he says. "When I finally got my first commission I had given up the idea of painting for profit. After all, I had been trying unsuccessfully for twenty years."

FOLLOWING up the Newcastle saga of Paul Lewis and William Whelby (alias jailbreakers Dennis Stafford and Anthony Hawkes) was like reconstructing a good party from the debris in the drawing-room on the morning after, says JOHN BULL writer W. E. Armstrong. "But I didn't even have the hosts to help me. They were already back in jail."

In his hunt for facts about the confidence trick that fooled the north—the story of it is on page 19—Armstrong met two kinds of people: those who had been "done" by the jailbreakers and were reluctant to talk at all; and others, such as barmaids and hotel boys, who were willing to tell all—"and, I suspected, more than all."

But Armstrong found little ill will in Newcastle towards Stafford and Hawkes. Rather, his impression was of admiration. "Fancy them taking us for a ride like that," was the attitude. One Teddy-boyish youth begged him to obtain Stafford's signed photograph. An attractive girl asked him to pass on a message of some tenderness. One odd fact—"something to do with the bemusing nature of charm," says Armstrong—was the difference of opinion about Stafford's appearance. Some described him as "rather like Liberace"; others said that he resembled Denis Compton. About Hawkes the verdict was unanimous—"just like a gentleman."

Twice Armstrong was taken as a friend of the pair, and asked to foot an unpaid bill. More than one tradesman thought that he was a plain-clothes man, and demanded his authority.

And a newsagent who supplied the pair with some of their voluminous reading matter—on credit—said: "I would do it again." Then he looked reflectively at Armstrong and said: "After all, how the devil do I know who you are?"

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Free Speech

- **Why accountants should study crime**
- **Dentists who book us in threes**
- **Chivalry—by British railways**

BIG sums of money on their way from banks to the wages departments of large firms are lost to our modern highwaymen far too often.

It's exasperating to think that the people responsible for these money withdrawals don't use intelligent trickery against surprise attack.

Instead of four men with all the money in one car, why not send four cars each carrying a quarter of the cash? Or why not have a dummy bag which can be yielded to the thief while the real one is hidden in a car safe?

Ideas of this kind are poured out by detective story writers year after year. Firms should make their accountants and security men spend a little more time browsing through the crime sections of their local libraries.—MRS. D. M. H., Ivybridge, Devon.

Filling In Time

So dentists are entitled to charge for lost time the people who break appointments without warning. ("Free Speech," November 9). This is fair enough, but before receiving compensation the dentist should produce his appointments book. At my dentist's it's the usual thing to arrive at the surgery in company with two other patients who have been given the same appointment, and I can always reckon on a forty-five minute wait.

I particularly object to this pernicious practice when the patient is a nervous child, so how about compensation for patients kept waiting by prosperous triple-booking dentists? Don't say "Change your dentist." They all have full appointment books. —MRS. M. C., Sale, Cheshire.

Turning It Over

I've just been sitting quietly in the firelight glow letting my thoughts turn to nostalgic memories of my childhood. I wondered what I missed most in life as it is today—and I

found that it was the sound of the barrel organ. I wonder what has become of them.—GEORGE C. ODELL, Pykenham Way, Hadleigh, Suffolk.

Radio killed the barrel organs—and the last London craftsman capable of making them died four years ago. But Mr. Odell might still be lucky enough to hear one in London, and possibly Manchester, where a few are hired out to itinerant musicians for about 5s. a day. He could certainly hear one at Lawshall Rectory, less than twenty miles from his home, where Canon A. O. Wintle rebuilds them for his collection of more than fifty.

Burning Contradictions

If an unfortunate housewife accidentally sets her chimney on fire she may be fined under certain by-laws. Yet her neighbours can make fires of garden refuse which smoke and smoulder for hours, even days, and make surrounding houses smell as though they were being burned down. The little back gardens are trim and charming, but the same authority which makes the law about chimneys also forbids the placing of garden

refuse in dustbins—so the gardeners have little choice.—MRS. EDNA M. CASS, Wordsworth Street, Penrith, Cumberland.

"It isn't the smoke nuisance which worries local authorities but the fire hazard," says the Association of Municipal Corporations. "A chimney well and truly ablaze is a serious threat to adjoining houses, particularly in densely built-up areas."

Teenage Champions

I don't think that Duncan Edwards of Manchester United can claim, at eighteen, to have been the youngest soccer star to play for England ("Soccer's Strong Man Defies The Knocks," JOHN BULL, October 19). That distinction belongs to Arthur Brown of Gainsborough who, in 1904, played centre-forward for England against Wales a short time before his eighteenth birthday. Brown, who died a few years ago, was a Sheffield United player who later transferred to Sunderland.—S. B. SHORT, Hawthorn Avenue, Gainsborough, Lincolnshire.

"We have no records which will prove or disprove this," says a Football Association spokesman. "But there is a strong tradition in Gainsborough that Brown was capped at seventeen or even sixteen years of age."

Heavy Gas

The description of a bucket being used to bale out gas from the bottom of a boat ("Salesman With Power To Burn," JOHN BULL, November 9) reminds me of my early days as a boy with an underground cable gang. My foreman gave me a rope and bucket and told me to bale out carbon dioxide gas from the bottom of a manhole.

After fifteen minutes he found that there was still as much gas there as when I started. I had been emptying the bucket on the uphill side of the hole and the heavy gas had been rolling back into it.—M. JONES, Heol Tyn-y-Coed, Rhiwbina, Cardiff.

Railway Chivalry

When my German mother-in-law arrived unexpectedly at Lincoln with no money to buy a railway ticket to my local station and only a card to show her destination, she was given a snack and a cup of coffee. The stationmaster put her on a train and telephoned ahead so that porters could meet her and make sure that she didn't get lost when changing trains. At Bingham a taxi had been booked in my name to bring her home.

Now she can only speak in highest praise of Britain's railway system. By these small acts of kindness the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

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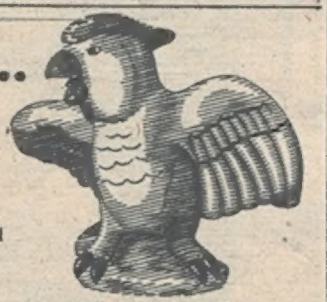

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IT'S A LEC REGD. Scarf

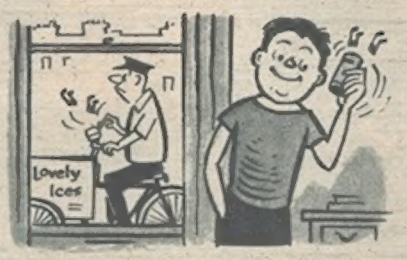
Free Speech

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

railway staff at Lincoln have helped to raise British prestige abroad. —G. C. TAYLOR, Trenchard Close, Newton, Nottinghamshire.

Safe At Home

With everyone being exhorted to save more I am surprised that the Post Office has never resumed the issue of



those small metal home safes in the shape of a book which were obtainable for a shilling before the war.

My family have had one each for more than thirty years. They give us a tremendous incentive to save small amounts which might otherwise be frittered away.—V. M. HAMPTON, Slade Road, Portishead, Somerset.

"We stopped issuing home safes to conserve metal during the war," says the Post Office Savings Bank. "Costs have risen so much since that we would now have to charge 2s. 6d. for them—and savings stamps have become so popular that we feel that the introduction of a parallel system would be pointless."

Lofty Lament

I knew a tall man in the army who said gloomily, "When we face an enemy platoon who do you think they'll all be firing at?" My son, who is six feet, three inches tall, is always lifting things up and down for people. In the office and in trains he is regarded as a human crane.

This is a small man's world. If anyone doubts it see how warily tall men have to enter buildings lest the top of a doorway bangs their heads. —E. H., Birmingham, 7.

Consumer Types

After years of dealing with customers of all nationalities, as a salesman in a London store, I find that the hardest-to-please bargain hunters are Australians, followed by Indians and South Africans. New Zealanders are less choosy and more considerate.

Egyptians are eternally suspicious but Persians are trusting. The most charming and diplomatic are Scandinavians. Most Europeans are difficult though swayable, but Germans usually know what they want and won't be put off with anything else. Russians want the best quality irrespective of price and are very charming—when they can be persuaded to talk.

Americans always translate the price into dollars and then decide to think it over. They are far from the "easy meat" they are reputed to be. What about the British? The English are gullible, the Scots sharp, the Irish crafty and the Welsh canny.

The most objectionable type of all is the woman who comes in with her husband and vetoes everything we try to sell him.—D. O'MEARA, London Road, Dunton Green, Kent.

Humping The Roller

M. Cross of London mentioned a road roller being carried up the Himalayas by coolies to Katmandu ("Free Speech," November 2). This was done in 1954 by my unit of the Indian Army to help in the building of an airfield and a road.

After dismantling the front roller and two back wheels from the main body we lashed them all to long poles for the coolies to lift. The fourteen-mile journey along the bridle path took weeks—and I was told that the up-to-date cars used by the Nepalese Royal Family were carried over the mountain passes by the same method. —P. A. BECK, Mackenzie Road, Beckenham, Kent.

Seasoned Audience

The method used by Miss E. Bates of Newcastle to fan back smoke at people who puff pipes and cigarettes in the cinema ("Free Speech," October 26) reminds me of an embarrassing incident twenty years ago.

While giving a cookery lecture in Huddersfield I liberally seasoned a dish with pepper, forgetting that I had switched on an electric fan to keep myself cool.

In seconds people in the front row were sneezing violently. Fortunately they burst out laughing, too.—MRS. M. L. A., Manaton, Devon.

Missing Muffins

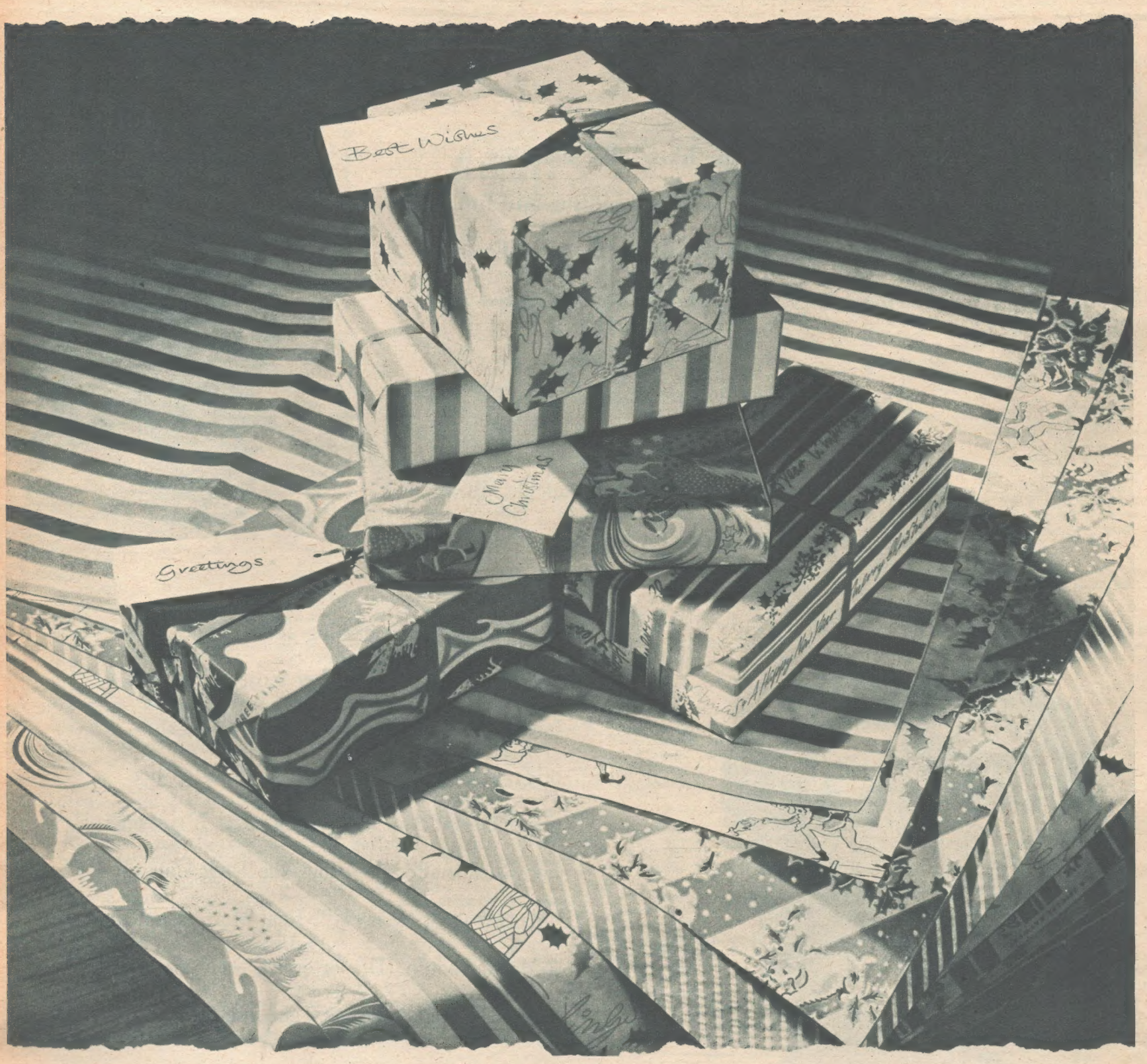
Why haven't I been able to buy a muffin since the war? There are pikelets or crumpets in plenty, but the newer generation of shop assistants seems never to have heard of muffins. —J. H., Wisbech, Cambs.

"Muffins were two or three times thicker than crumpets and had no holes," says a master baker. "Crumpets are easily made in bulk because the mixture can be dropped straight on to a hotplate, but muffins must be turned in the oven and have priced themselves out of existence."

John Bull pays one guinea for each letter published in "Free Speech," and at the usual rates for photographs. Readers with problems (other than medical) should write to the John Bull Free Advice Service, whose experts answer questions by post

THE COVER

SOON there will be five of them, and that means busy times ahead. So, down from dusty, dark solitude come the accoutrements of the happiest days of family life: high-chair, playpen and others part company with the water tank to take their places in the personal life of A. N. Other, junior. On such a happy day artist Batchelor will excuse the lady-in-waiting for being so absorbed in baby's red carpet treatment—knowing, of course, that jaunts up ladders in high-heeled shoes will NOT be tolerated when her mother comes to stay.



Papers with a gift for expression.
Every good kind of paper, from the sheerly gay to the plainly utilitarian, has its place in the Spicers range for every business or homely purpose. Spicers 'Gaywraps'– in the shops now – provide a wealth of choice of colourful designs ready to add a gay finishing touch to any Christmas, birthday or unbirthday present. Wealth did we say? Why, the prices are very reasonable indeed!

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GAYWRAPS

SPICERS 'GAYWRAPS' *are on display in most stationery shops. Make your selection now—before Christmas shopping gets into its last minute stride.*

She likes what she likes—like cooking, swimming, curly poodles, violins and fun. Neat, petite, sweetly sure of herself. Even when she was at school she was called . . .

yes . . . Yana! And how many Head Girls and Games Captains do *you* know with the voice and the charm to go straight to the top of the bill in variety, and straight to the hearts of millions?

Here's an interesting thing about Yana. Seventy-five per cent of her most enthusiastic fans, in theatre audiences and on T.V., are—other women. Could that be a tribute to her genuineness? And here's another . . . If you offer her a drink after the show, she'll tell you "Martini—just by itself!". Real Martini, out of a Martini bottle. (Dry or sweet, according to mood.) Something very genuine there, too!

Better drink

MARTINI

Sweet or Dry

STORM

by BRIAN CLEEVE

ILLUSTRATED BY LAURENT

Olaf had flirted with my girl. Now, as our ship sank, I could watch him slowly drown

THE waves came solid green and white-bearded, like frost giants racing. We were bow on to them, but every third crest or so the steering gear would slip a link of its worn chains, the rust-red fo'c'sle head would slide sideways, and the next crest would hit us on the starboard quarter. You could feel the deck shuddering.

"Who's at the wheel?" I said.

The bos'n spat down wind. "Olaf."

"That big lout?" I said. "He ought to be steering a taxi."

"Lout?" said the bos'n in his slow, placid voice. "I thought you two were friends?" He filed a thumbnail across his weathered old face. "You quarrelling?"

"I wouldn't waste a quarrel on a rat like that," I said. And I realized with an odd kind of hurt that this time I meant it.

This wasn't just a quarrel. We'd had those often enough: over a drink; over cards; over a loan. But not like this. When I shut my eyes I could see Olaf's face—the short, three-week fringe of beard, the pale grey eyes—and I wanted to put my fist right in the middle of it. And then twist.

I thought of the last night ashore, and me going into The Spanish Landing like some kind of monkeyed-up Romeo, with my hair brushed and flowers in my hand, to be told that Olaf had been there half an hour before

Dark eyes she had, smooth tanned skin. . . . "Nice dish, eh, Spud, boy?" Olaf said. I could have killed him for that

me and that Sue had gone out with him. And I remembered the snicker that had gone round the bar.

I walked that night till my feet were ragged: down the dock road with the smell of wet iron and wet coal-slack, out through the town where the villas lie behind their hedges, warm and curtained. And with every villa that I passed I thought of Sue. Dark eyes she had, like jet buttons, and smooth tanned skin. And a soft, small body that fitted into the snug of a man's arm.

We'd met her a week before, first night ashore, pulling the beer taps behind the bar in The Spanish Landing. And she had a Spanish look to her, that went with the name of the pub: silver ear-rings, and black hair cut short and rough above her neck.

Olaf had dug me in the ribs with his elbow. "Nice dish, eh, Spud, boy?" And right from that second I could have killed him where he stood. Because I wasn't seeing a nice dish. For the first time in my life since I last saw my mother I was looking at a woman. A woman who could be a mother. Could be a wife.

I felt so shy that I couldn't tell her what I wanted to drink, and Olaf had to do the ordering. But by closing time I was telling her my life story, and the next night I came back by myself, and when the bar shut we went for a walk together.

I HAD to bend down a long way to talk to her; her head hardly came much above my elbow. But it didn't matter. We didn't do much talking. We just walked in the starlight, her feet very light and quick on the path, mine long and slow. And after a little while I slipped my arm round her shoulders and she let it stay there.

The villas went by on either side of us, and I thought of red coals burning in kitchen stoves, and the smell of new bread baking. I thought of small rooms upstairs and children, and a woman with brown arms crooning them to sleep.

Perhaps we walked five miles like that, she half-resting in the circle of my arm. And then the heel came off her shoe, and she stopped and said: "Oh, what shall I do?"

"I'll carry you," I said, and I imagined the feel of her in my arms, and wished it had been fifty miles and not five we'd come walking.

"Through the streets?" she said. "What would anybody say that saw us? Oh, why did I ever come out with you, you big giraffe? Get me a taxi."

I'd never thought of that. It was almost as good as carrying her home. We rode together in the back, with glass between us and the driver, and the seats were soft, like in a cinema, and after a while she forgave me and let me hold her hand. I closed my fingers over it, and it was warm and soft. And, just before we got to The Spanish Landing, I kissed her, where the dark hair sprang from her forehead, so that half my lips were against warm silk, and half against warm skin.

The next night she couldn't come out, but the day after that was her half-day, and we went to the pictures together. For two nights after that she had to go straight home from work, but I spent all the evenings in the bar watching her, and talking to her when she wasn't serving customers, until it seemed as if she belonged to me already.

I got to recognize the little flick she gave to her wrist when she'd draw a pint of beer; the funny kind of bob of the head and stoop she'd make as she took the full tankard from under the tap. And I wondered how long it would take to save enough for a house. Would she wait that long for me . . . ?

There was a great crash like a milk wagon from up amidships, and I came back to the ship from The Spanish Landing like a man woken out of his sleep by a firebell. The bows had slid off again and there was green water laced with white five feet deep in the well-deck. It hit the bridge

Water burst through the plates like blood from a cut throat; a great spurting gush, then a

housing harder than a row of trucks and the bos'n lurched against me.

"That lout," I shouted in his ear. "Let me go up and take the wheel off him. You need a man up there weather like this."

The wind tore my voice away and blew it to America, and the bos'n just grinned without knowing what I'd said and held his old woollen hat tight on his head. We were the standby hands for that watch, getting what shelter we could in the lee of the lamp room, and watching that nothing on deck broke adrift. But there wasn't much we could have done if it had.

I looked up at the masthead forrard, and it was going round like a drunken corkscrew. "She'll break her back if this goes on," I said. "She's feeling soggy already." I swayed on my feet to meet the heel of the deck, and it was true. Truer than it had been a couple of minutes earlier when I'd first noticed it. She wasn't lifting so fast out of the troughs.

It was as if she was held down at the bows by something. Not much. But it shouldn't be like that at all. The gale came back before the bos'n could answer, plastering us against the dirty white bulkhead, like two pieces of wet laundry against a fence, and I stopped thinking about the ship, my mind drawn back to Sue and The Spanish Landing, like a tongue to a broken tooth. . . .

I had made up my mind to marry Sue. The next night was our last night ashore and I had spent an hour and a half readying myself and prettying up. I borrowed the bos'n's cut-throat to get a closer shave than I could get with my safety, and I stole some of the mate's hair cream, and the steward's eau-de-Cologne.

I would have taken Olaf's new suit, only he'd already gone ashore in it. But even in my own rig I looked the kind of man who could ask a girl to marry him. And when I got ashore I bought an armful of flowers off an old woman. A princess would have liked them.

I walked to The Spanish Landing as if my feet were singing. I had my money belt in my hip pocket with the three pounds I had left tucked inside it, and I was going to give it to her as the start of our marriage money. I wasn't going to wet my mouth with another drink until I had a house for her and all that her heart wanted. The flowers smelled like a wedding day as I held them carefully.

And then I found Sue gone, and with Olaf, half an hour before.

All that night I walked, and it was four bells as I went up the gangway, and there was Olaf leaning over the rail, still in his shoregoing rig, with a sly grin smirking across his black-bearded face.

"Hallo, Giraffe," he said. And it was as if lightning had struck me. That had been what she had called me. The silly kind of name that

slackening, then another gush. "It's bad," I said as Olaf and the bos'n came down beside me

lovers call one another. And she had told it to Olaf.

I covered the rest of the gangway in one jump and hit him a blow that would have split his skull if it had landed. He ducked sideways and it hit the bulkhead instead, and then he hit me in the stomach and we were both down on the deck, knees and elbows going. But I was so tired that I couldn't hurt him, and when the mate came out from his cabin and started kicking us, I let Olaf go.

"You drunken scum," the mate said when he had us standing. "Do you want me to call the police? Now let me see you shake hands."

"Sure," said Olaf. "I'm not quarrelling. Shake hands with me, Giraffe."

THE mate had to call five men to hold me down, and the captain fined me a pound for trying to kick the mate, although it was only because he got in the way.

"Any more trouble from you on this trip, Murphy," the captain said when he was fining me, "and you'll not only get a bad discharge, but I'll put you in irons until I can find some zoo that will take you in."

It was lucky for both of us that I didn't get what he meant by zoo, until afterwards.

That night when we were having tea I didn't give anybody a chance to start anything.

"The first man that says"—I couldn't bring myself to say the word giraffe—"that says the name of a certain animal in my hearing on this ship, or talks about zoos, or anything like that, is going over the side." I took my sheath knife out of my belt and stabbed it into the timber of the messroom table. "And in case you think this is all very funny, I promise you that he'll go over the side sewn up in a sail, with the old man reading the burial service over him." I looked at Olaf. "I only hope it's you."

"I'm sorry, Spud," Olaf said. "I didn't mean any harm. I just called round at her house once or twice after you had taken her home, and took her out dancing. She thought you were a crazy bloke, always wanting to walk miles till she was crippled. But I didn't mean any harm. Last night I didn't even know you wanted to take her out. Let's shake."

He stuck his hand out across the table, until it nearly touched my knife, and I looked at it for a long moment. I remembered all the times we'd quarrelled and shaken on it after. The things we'd been in together. But this time was different.

"Don't dirty my side of the table, Olaf," I said. "Take your hand back." And I drew the knife out of the timber very slowly and went back to my bunk. . . .

And now we had been four days at sea, and there was a kind of scar tissue over the wound in my mind. But underneath it was still festering. Another wave poured its tons of water into the well-deck, and this time it came up and over on to the bridge-deck where we were standing, running over our seaboots in a smooth river of green.

"Sea's getting higher," said the bos'n.

"It isn't," I said. "We're riding lower."

You could feel the awkward weight in her now, like a dog with a bucket on his head, worrying and thrusting, trying to bury her nose in the wave troughs. The bos'n knew it too. I could see it in the way he was testing with his feet and listening to the engine.

Six bells rang, and I saw Olaf coming down off the wheel. "Bos'n," he shouted. "The mate wants to know can you get forrard to the fore peak and take a sounding? He thinks we're making water forrard."

"You better come, both of you," was all the bos'n said. "Three-man job in this sea."

I looked at the forward well-deck below us and swallowed. Even when the waves had broken, it was still knee deep in water. When they were breaking, it would be as deep as a man's head. And there wasn't too long between waves. I wondered how it would feel to be caught in that giant boil of fury and be swept over the side.

"Run," the bos'n was shouting. And we were down the ladder and knee deep in the slithering rush of water, with the bridge high and black above us, like an island of safety. I found I was running across the well-deck automatically, not even knowing that I'd left the shelter of the bridge housing. I saw the next wave coming as if it was on a film. Ten feet to go. Five. My hand on the rope-bound rail of the ladder. Then I was up and crouching with the two of them behind the iron barricade of the windlass.

I'd stopped thinking by then. There was just the huge surge and crash of the wave, the sodden downwards lurch of the ship, the jagged black cogwheel of the windlass against the iron-grey sky, the flurrying scream of the wind.

WE waited for the wind to ease again, and then the bos'n pulled our heads close to his mouth and shouted: "We've got to get down into the fore peak. Spud, you go first, loosen the dogs holding the hatch, get in bloody quick and slam the lid tight again. Hold it down till you hear me knock. Then open and I come in. Same again till Olaf comes, eh? Got me?"

"I got you," I said. There wasn't anything else to say. I waited till the water had gone creaming off the fo'c'sle head and the bows were lifting, and then I ran the three paces to the little rusty iron hatch that covered the manhole into the rope locker. I straddled my legs and wrenched, and the first dog damn near came off in my hands.

One, two, three, and the last dog loosened. Up with the manhole cover. If the wave caught me going through, if it slammed the iron across my back, I would be in two halves. Down I went until my feet touched iron rungs; until I was all in darkness. I pulled the iron cover down after me, like a trap-door spider into his trap. And then I listened to the wave, iron thunder on the deck six inches over my head.

A boot heel rang on the hatch and I lifted it for the bos'n to scramble in on top of me, boots grinding on the iron rungs of the ladder beside my hands.

"I thought you'd gone to sleep," said the bos'n. "I'll lift for Olaf. You turn on the light and we'll see what's happened."

I went down gingerly, ankle deep, knee deep, thigh deep into water. I felt for the deck plates with my feet and the bulkhead with my hand, fumbling for the light switch. A skim of pale yellow light fell on the black surface of the water round me and made deep shadows under the wooden shelves where the spare coils of rope were stored. A lot of the coils had shifted, in spite of their weight, and the yarn lashings and

Continued on page 37

THE OFFICE OF SECRET WAR—2

He hated explosions, wouldn't drop from a plane—and refused to fire a gun. Yet he was determined to join our fight to set France free

My gamble on a frightened man

by Colonel **MAURICE BUCKMASTER**

THROUGHOUT our years of battle with the Germans, our objective was to do them active harm. Our rôle at Special Operations Executive headquarters was not that of spymasters, but of active and belligerent planners of operations to be carried out in advance of the Allied landing.

The usual picture of an agent is of a man lying up, watching enemy movements and reporting them back to his home base. But the agents of S.O.E. were essentially active.

At the beginning we were not absolutely certain which kind of men would make the best agents, and sometimes we made mistakes. But in the case of Denis Rake I took a risk which, as it turned out, was fully justified.

Rake was born in Belgium and came to England between the wars. He went on the stage and appeared in *No, No, Nanette* and other musical comedies. He went into the army when war was declared and was in France with the British Expeditionary Force. After Dunkirk he did a number of jobs where his French made him useful, including that of interpreter and wireless officer on a Free French minesweeper.

One day in late 1941 he was sitting in the saloon bar of a pub in Southsea when some R.A.F. men came in and asked him to join them. He did. Carelessly and indifferently the R.A.F. men talked about a "parachute job" for which volunteers were wanted.

"Have you any idea what the job entails?" Denis asked.

"Thinking of volunteering, old boy?"

"Yes—as a matter of fact I am. . . ."

A month later, after devious inquiries through his solicitor, he was put in touch with Major Lewis Gielgud, at that time our recruiting officer. Afterwards Gielgud came in to see me. "He's very keen," said the major, "and his French is all right. He says he wants to do a worthwhile job and hasn't been able to find one yet. Apparently he's a qualified wireless operator."

"Good Lord—that's just what we're short of."

"Yes, I know, but——"

"If he's really a qualified W/T boy, I don't think we should turn him down," I said. "Let's put him through the training course, anyway."

Denis Rake went to our training school near Guildford, Surrey, and the first reports we received of him were far from encouraging: he hated explosions and refused to have anything to do with assault courses or demolitions; he even

"How can you explain all this money you have?" one German officer asked Denis. "This aunt of yours in Lyons—is she very rich as well as ill?"

ILLUSTRATION BY ZELINSKI

refused to do revolver practice, maintaining that a wireless operator would not need to use a revolver. Our escorting officer's report was that Rake was "hopeless."

If he had been recruited in the later years of Special Operations Executive, when we could be more selective, it is doubtful if he would ever have got past the first few weeks of his training. But Rake insisted—and I saw his point—that all this explosive work was quite beyond anything he was likely to be called upon to do in France. I allowed him to remain at the training school.

One day, one of my officers came into my office and said: "Well, your friend Rake's really done it this time."

"What is it now?"

"Last night he refused to do his balloon jump. I think we'll have to reject him."

"They're crying out for wireless men," I said. "Surely there's another way of getting him in."

"Look, forgive me for putting it this way, but I don't see how we can rely on the courage of a man who won't even pull the trigger of a revolver."

"Let's have a word with the trick-cyclist," I suggested.

"Oh Lord!"

I talked to our psychiatrist just the same. On the whole I did not find him over-helpful, for while our psychiatrists were careful and explicit, and often profoundly interesting, they equally often seemed to me to miss the points with which we were specifically concerned. I never was able to evaluate the importance of a mother-fixation in the selection of an agent for a particular mission.

This time, however, perhaps because he said what I had hoped he would, I was impressed. "Lots of people are nervous of jumping out of balloons," he said, "where they could fairly easily be persuaded to bale out of an aircraft. The fact that there's a cable attached to the ground often brings on an attack of vertigo which would never occur if the drop were from an aircraft totally unconnected with the ground."

"What about the explosion fear?"

"Is he going to do any demolition work?" asked the psychiatrist.

"Not if I can help it."

"Why worry then?"

"You don't think he's going to get into a blue funk over everything he does?"

"From what you've told me, he sounds a thoroughly dedicated sort of person who wants to do the job he's volunteered for and isn't prepared to do a lot of things he considers outside his range. All the same, I shouldn't persist with the parachuting. Isn't there any other way of getting him to the target area?"

"That's a thought," I said. . . .

Three days later we heard that one of our wireless operators in Lyons had been caught and shot. I gave Major Jacques de Guélis, our briefing officer, the word to have Rake ready to leave for Lyons in two days. He came straight up to London for his briefing in our S.O.E. flat at Orchard Court in Portman Square, near Marble Arch.

"I'm sure you're going to do a first-rate job," I told him.

There was a knock at the door and Jerry Morel, our operations officer, came in. "I've got the money from the bank, sir."

"Good stuff. I hope it's in old notes, as we asked."

"I haven't looked yet, sir." He emptied the money on my desk—bundles of gleaming new notes. "Just what the doctor ordered," Morel commented sarcastically.

"We shall have to do something about this," I said. "Call in anybody who isn't vitally tied up. Dirtying notes detail!"

Gielgud, Vera Atkins—my personal assistant—and my secretary, Yveline, came into the room looking very suspicious. I sent Yveline off to get some oil and some grease. Meanwhile I undid the elastic bands round each bundle and flung the thousand and five thousand franc notes carelessly into the air.

"Get busy," I ordered. "Rub them in your hands, scribble on them, fold them and generally muck them up. We've got to have old notes for new."

All the time we sought to protect our men from being betrayed by trivialities; they faced enough danger without being revealed by so small a detail as a new note, a tailor's tab or the fact of carrying a British pencil.

Before being sent on a mission all our men were searched by an ex-Scotland Yard expert—trouser turn-ups were emptied, linings examined and cigarette cases brushed out to eliminate any Virginian tobacco. We even had our own dentist, who excised British fillings (neat and silver) and substituted French ones (bulky and gold).

Some agents thought that we were going rather far, but in London we felt it our duty to give our men every possible assistance, no matter how niggling.

Sometimes, however, in spite of all precautions, an instinctive reaction would trip an agent. One of our girls landed in France in 1943 and successfully reached the large town where she was due to rendezvous with a local Resistance man. In the middle of the town she looked right, which of course is the natural thing to do in England, before crossing the road. A howl of brakes and the curses of a lorry driver revealed her mistake.

At once she was the centre of a crowd of townspeople to whom the lorry driver was expostulating furiously. It was her bad luck that a Gestapo agent was in the crowd. With cruel speed he deduced the real reason for the girl's accident and arrested her. . . .

When we had dirtied all the money, we handed it over to Denis Rake. The next day he was on a grey camouflaged trawler bound for Gibraltar and the south of France.

Denis spent most of his time in his tiny cabin rehearsing the cover story he had been given; he decided that his cover of a Belgian business man seeking contacts in France was rather slender.

It was still difficult for us to give really credible and watertight cover stories to our men, and we relied on them to improve their stories in the field.

At Gibraltar, Denis was moved from the trawler to a felucca carrying the Portuguese flag. Two nights later a small rowing-boat landed him on a beach near Juan-les-Pins. He carried two suitcases, one containing a wireless set, the other his personal belongings and a large number of dirty notes.

Denis made his way through the town and found that he felt much more confident now than he had ever done during training. He had the address of a Dr. Levy in Cannes, whom he was to contact. The password was: "Do you know where I can buy some good oysters?" The doctor would then reply: "No, but I have some shrimps you would like."

Denis lay up for the night on the road to Cannes, which he entered after dawn.

The doctor's house was number 8 rue de la Sainte-Marie, a secluded road of detached villas. Denis had been warned that, if there was danger, the statues on the balcony facing the street would be turned towards him, and he should not enter. There were no statues at all on the balcony of number 8 rue de la Sainte-Marie.

Denis turned and walked quickly back out of the front gate of the villa. He hurried on up the road, looking for any house which had statues on the balcony. There was none. He tried to recall his briefing; he was certain that de Guélis had said number eight. He went back

Continued on page 38

Denis Rake and agent Nancy Wake (left) after the liberation of Montluçon. With them are an American soldier and two French comrades

Captain Peter Churchill, one-time secret agent in France. "He was here, there and everywhere, doing the work of ten men," says Buckmaster

She's temperamental, likely to swoon or to murder fellow passengers. But to Martin Marks she's precious, an . . .

Angel in a plastic bag

by NORMAN PHILLIPS

At London Airport, Marks checks a consignment of tropical fish. Five hundred may be conveyed in one bag. B.O.A.C. now carries more fish than human beings

PASSENGERS on the Brussels-London flight were at first puzzled when the stewardess carried cup after cup of hot water to one traveller. He was a worried, middle-aged man named Martin Marks, who was nursing a collection of tropical fish.

Outside temperatures were below freezing when Marks carried his tank aboard the aircraft. Hot water was essential to keep the fish from being chilled to death. The stewardess heated it in her tiny galley and, before the flight was over, half the passengers had joined a paper cup chain to save Marks's valuable cargo.

Marks no longer acts as a nursemaid to fish in the air. He has developed plastic bags in which they travel unattended and he can now handle 25,000 small, colourful fish a week on flights from the tropics to fanciers' aquariums.

Aeroplane tickets for fish cost Marks more than £25,000 a year. He pays gladly because air travel reduces losses, which are as high as fifty per cent by sea, to a negligible quarter of one per cent. What continues to bother him is the fact that eighty per cent of the £25,000 represents freight charges for the water in which his fish travel.

America's ten million tropical fish fanciers are Marks's best market, but he also supplies scientists who use fish in the study of genetics, water pollution and pregnancy. The Colonial Office sought his help in its move to increase stocks of edible fish in Malta and Malacca; and recently there has been a demand from doctors, dentists and hospital authorities who are installing aquariums to calm nervous patients.

Marks himself is the last person on whom fish exert a tranquilising effect. They trouble him. One of his principal worries is calming valuable specimens. A bumpy flight can produce airsickness in fish. Last summer when two lionhead fish arrived at London Airport, Marks sat up with them half the night to restore their spirits.

The lionheads were intended to be star attractions at an airline's garden party. They reached London looking sluggish and dispirited. Marks placed them in a tank filled with water at the correct temperature and, for the next eight hours, alternately massaged one and then the other. The fish revived so well that after the garden party, he sold the pair for £60.

Another method used by Marks to revive ailing stock is to draw the fish backward through the water, thereby expelling excess water and providing a form of artificial respiration. He meets his fish at the airport with an emergency kit containing a thermometer, spare bags, nets, antiseptic pills to counter fungus or virus, and oxygen. A whiff of oxygen is often enough to restore their vitality after a prolonged journey.

Tropical fish are the most numerous category of passengers for British Overseas Airways Corporation, and Marks has also won for them priority second only to humans. When an aircraft carrying pet fish is delayed, they are transferred to the first available replacement.

Most varieties survive the twenty-five hour flight from Singapore to London without any difficulty. As many as five hundred are carried in one plastic bag packed inside an insulated cardboard container.

Marks developed the plastic bags to replace a system using four gallon petrol tins, heaters and aerators. Under this method an attendant travelled with the fish to look after the equipment and on one flight Marks was kept busy recapturing fish that had escaped from the tanks. Fish are sensitive to noise and the sound of the engines revving up caused them to jump out of their containers.

While Marks was studying the transport problem, a friend brought him a plastic pillow cover from New York. He filled it with water, added a few fish and decided that this was what he wanted. A manufacturer makes the bags of polythene.

When the bag is filled with water at the correct temperature, a disinfectant dye is added, and then the fish. Before sealing, oxygen is administered. The pack is placed inside an insulated carton and loaded on an aircraft. At the end of the journey, attendants armed with blankets rush out to cover the boxes.

One effective insulator was discarded because of its odour. It reminded a pilot of dead fish and he refused a shipment bound for Canada. The airline paid compensation when Marks opened the box two days later to show that its contents were thriving. Fish in good condition can go for as long as sixty-five hours in a plastic bag without attention.

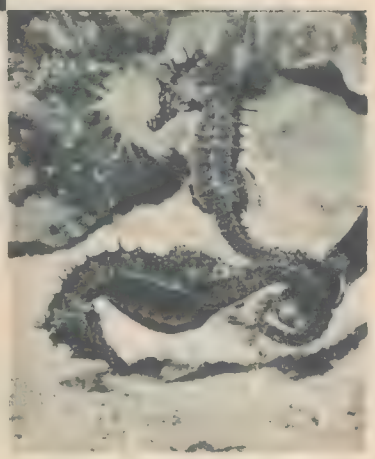
Fish from the Far East rest from their travels in tanks at Marks's London headquarters before going on to the United States. They also break their journey in New York. Despite these intervals, Marks says it is not unusual for a fish to be swimming in the Malayan jungle one day

When two lionhead fish were upset in transit, Marks massaged them to restore their spirits. They sold for £60

Harlequins are prized for their colour, and are used in research on pollution because they can live in small quantities of water

Angel fish are known by fanciers as scalare. They are peaceful until they meet guppies

Archers capture insects resting on overhead foliage by shooting a jet of water from their spout-like jaws



Sea horses are among the imports that Marks finds easy to check. He counts five hundred small fish in eight or nine minutes

A Siamese fighting fish will even attack its own image in a mirror. Two males may fight to the death

and three weeks later to be equally at home in a Californian aquarium.

Marks watches carefully over the packing of fish. He has small bags for individual bettas, the Siamese fighting fish that will attack even their own image in a mirror. Two males in the same bag or tank would tear each other to pieces, although it is safe for one to travel with a number of other species.

Angels, known as scalare, are peaceful until they encounter guppies, but guppies breed so quickly that Marks regards them as expendable. Two of these diminutive fish can raise a family of many hundreds in a year. Their fast breeding habits make them useful in the study of genetics.

The tilapia, another fast breeder, is a bigger fish that can be used for food. Marks sent to Africa for supplies of tilapia, to stock breeding pools in Malta as part of a Colonial Office food plan. He sent others to Malacca where they are being crossbred with a local variety raised in fish ponds and rice paddies, and harvested as an important food source.

Africa provides Marks with another worrisome, solitary traveller, the trunkfish, which can overcome a tankful of fish with a poison that it exudes when alarmed. The dragon fish, from Ceylon, is armed with poisonous spikes, and Marks once rescued his secretary from injury when he found her trying to stroke one.

Zebra fish are another of Marks's worries. He once lost some white-clouds that had been mixed with them. The white-clouds died trying to keep pace with the fast swimming zebras.

Marks's aim is to slow down fish activity in transit so that they will require less water. He has given them barbiturate sleeping potions and tranquilising drugs, but the experiments failed because in a batch of five hundred there is always one on whom the drugs have no effects.

"One active little fish," Marks says, "can stir up a lot of havoc among 499 others that are trying to sleep."

A possible solution may be to deep-freeze fish, and Marks is following experiments in this field being carried out by Professor Emmens in Australia.

Marks, who has lost 11,000 fish in four days from mysterious infections, also uses antiseptic dyes to protect them from illness.

Most tropical fish that Marks handles come from fresh water, but for sea inhabitants he stocks sea water salt to be dissolved in water. The solution is tested for salinity, acidity and temperature before fish are placed in it.

Artificial sea water seems to suit the fish but in the United States some of Marks's customers insist on filling their aquariums with water that comes actually from the sea. They pay up to 2s. a gallon for supplies.

Some fish breed happily while they are in the air, and one shipment that started in Singapore with five hundred fish in a bag reached London with a hundred or more babies.

Food supplies are another of Marks's worries. Not long ago he imported his first archer, a fish that captures insects by shooting a jet of water at them. It has a strongly formed jaw in the shape of a spout and it can direct a spray heavy enough to knock down insects resting on overhead foliage. Marks collected live flies to provide the archer with targets.

Archers, black angels, sea horses and other unusual types are easily counted, but most of Marks's trade is in bulk shipments. He has handled in the past six years a total of nearly three million harlequins, which sell to the public at about 3s. each.

FANCIERS like harlequins because of their colour; scientists find them useful because of their tiny size. At Stevenage, where research is being done on water pollution, harlequins are used in experiments that reproduce, in miniature, conditions in rivers and streams. Using these little fish, tests can be conducted in laboratories on small amounts of polluted water. The harlequins are placed in samples of suspected water and their reactions are observed.

It takes Marks eight or nine minutes to count five hundred harlequins swimming in a shallow tray.

Chinese experts in Malaya mystified him with their ability to estimate the number of miniature fish in a tank. Their margin of error was only two or three in two hundred.

Born in London in 1907, Marks studied engineering, but abandoned it in favour of scriptwriting for the B.B.C. and films. After wartime service in the navy, he worked in India and Jersey before joining a friend in the business of importing Italian products.

During a trip to Bologna, one of the world centres of goldfish breeding, Marks bought a few fish for a friend. The gift was appreciated because of a shortage of goldfish in Britain caused by restricted import licences.

Marks investigated the situation, obtained permits and went back to Italy. He returned to London with a plane full of goldfish. Dealers, who had been starved of supplies, surrounded him on the tarmac at London airport and, waving fists full of £1 notes, bought the entire shipment.

Tropical fish from the Far East were then being shipped by sea to the United States. The voyage took two months and losses were high. Marks worked with airline officials to capture this trade.

Plastic bags provided the solution. A New York dealer, visiting Marks when one of the first shipments arrived, declared: "I want my fish that way."

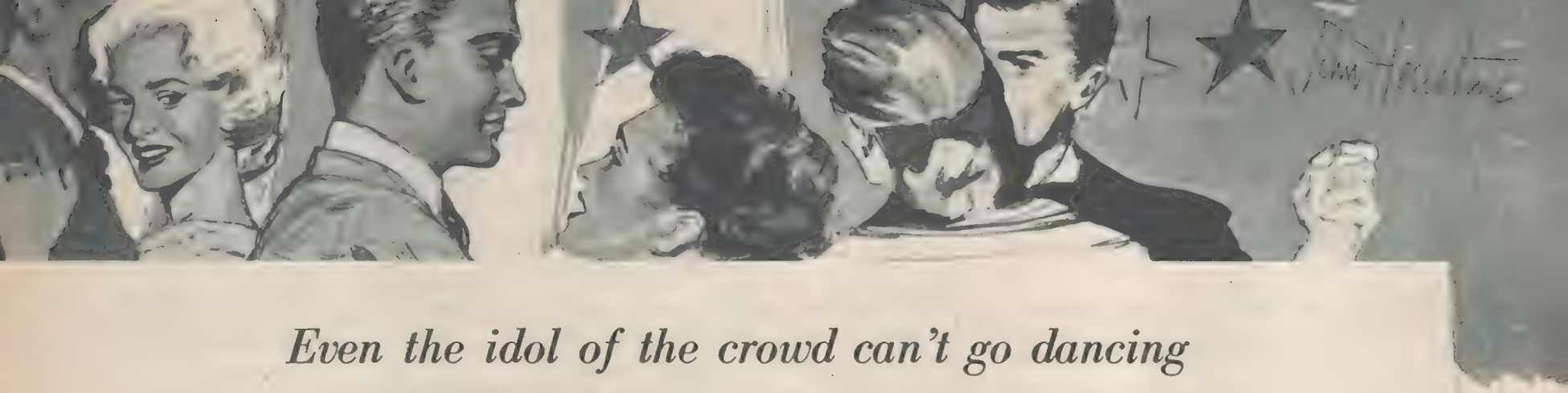
He placed an order for all Marks could supply in the next six months.

Marks immediately flew to Malaya, Siam, Ceylon, India and Pakistan to train suppliers in the use of bags. Fish by the thousand began arriving by air and, on one occasion, Marks filled an entire Comet with tropical fish.

London Airport is not only a major transit centre for tropical fish, but harassed passenger controllers have their own tanks of fish. They were installed by the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation, at the suggestion of a psychologist, as a sedative for the staff.

Soon after they were obtained, a passenger control officer watched Marks waiting restlessly for a valuable consignment that had been delayed by fog. The official, who did not recognize the dealer, approached and, hoping to calm him, said: "Would you care to look in here, sir? We have something guaranteed to take your mind off your troubles."

He led Marks into an office dominated by a tank of tropical fish. THE END



Even the idol of the crowd can't go dancing in football boots, not if he wants to be . . .

The sort of man a girl falls for

by BRETON AMIS

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN HESELTINE

ANYONE in Laxley would have laughed at the idea of Joe Bushell taking dancing lessons. He was a very big young man, a mighty swiper of sixes, a massive full-back, and useful with his fists, but where his feet were concerned he could hardly walk into a room without knocking over a chair or two.

Love, however, does strange things to a man, and every Thursday evening after work Joe cycled the seven miles to Meade for a secret session with Miss Todd of the Academy, teacher of modern ballroom dancing.

At first he hated every moment of it and so did Miss Todd, a dyed and dedicated blonde of forty plus. "Joe, you're *resisting* me," she told him, although he had her sinewy figure clamped against his 42-inch chest. "I can't teach you if you don't *want* to learn."

"I must," he said sadly.

"That means there's a girl in it," said the shrewd Miss Todd. "Try to imagine that I'm the girl, and that you're actually enjoying yourself."

Joe didn't think his imagination would stretch that far. Betty Ringer's hair was as soft and yellow as a day-old chick's fluff. She had gay blue eyes, a warm smile, and—this was the snag—dancing feet. But he did his best and it worked so well that he nearly found himself dropping a kiss on Miss Todd's rigid, brassy waves.

From then on he progressed, literally, in leaps and bounds. With his big face flaming, a lock of dark hair clinging damply to his concentration-furrowed brow, he allowed himself to be bullied and coaxed round the floor until he was sweating like a miler. He had always reckoned dancing an effeminate pastime, only taken up by the most predatory males, but thirty minutes with Miss Todd could be as exhausting as extra time in a cup-tie. While the radiogram wheezed a waltz or rattled out a quick-step, she drilled him until his feet were no longer under his control and he responded as to the voice of a sergeant-major.

Miss Todd was quite pleased with him, and Joe was delighted with himself. The day she allowed him to dance through the whole record of a fox-trot without once pulling him up for a lecture gave him a bigger thrill than his first century for the Laxley club.

"I'd never have believed it," Miss Todd said, "but if you forget your feet, keep your head and don't try to run before you can walk, you may make a dancer."

"When can I start?" he asked.

"The sooner the better. You need practice."

Joe thought he had timed it beautifully. On Friday the club was holding its first winter dance, and that was where he would surprise Betty.

He had planned it three months ago at the cricket festival dance, during a miserable evening when he had wandered round with a fixed smile, hating the whole crowd—especially the girls. Obviously they had no use for a mighty swiper or a chap who could break the net with a penalty kick.

Betty had called, "Hi, Joe," but she was dancing with Tony Tyler, who had learned to dance when he should have been riding his trike and had grown into a sleek little wolf with a toothy smile, lots of white shirt cuff, and a smooth line in small talk. Joe despised him and envied him, and in that moment had decided that he himself would be the sort of man girls fell for.

Especially Betty. He had been in love with her since schooldays, although she didn't know it and always went with the dancing crowd. He had pictured her in his arms, the big and the small, the weak and the strong, and had known she would never be there unless he learned to dance. It was her passion. He hoped it was the only reason why Tony Tyler was so often her partner.

Instinct told him that if he had been able to dance he would have won her long ago. They got on well together at the cricket, sitting in deck chairs after he'd had his knock, talking of their friends, their jobs, and how they had once shared the same desk at school. His hopes had soared, but somehow she had cooled off, as if she couldn't be bothered with a chap who wouldn't take the trouble to share her pleasures.

From now on it was going to be different. On Friday he'd waltz with her, then perhaps they'd try a quick-step, which was easier than the fox-trot. During another waltz he'd say casually: "How about coming to the Blue Jay with me on Wednesday, Betty? I hear the floor's quite good." If she still liked him, she wouldn't be able to resist, and that would be the beginning. Just the beginning. . . .

On Friday he went to the dance with his grey suit nicely pressed and a brand new tie to give it a finishing touch. She was there, sitting with a group of girl friends, which showed there was nothing serious between her and Tony Tyler, who hovered near.

Joe gave her a wave and a grin. He wasn't going to rush it. For a couple of dances he'd stand on the sideline, getting the feel of the floor. When the music started his feet tapping, he'd stroll across, but at the moment his feet were unusually cold inside their snug, thin-soled size elevens.

HE lit a cigarette and talked to old Mather, the secretary, while he watched the first quickstep. Not too many on the floor. The Top-Pop Quartette was good. He could do it, though not as well as Tony Tyler, whose dainty feet were performing incredible evolutions which Betty's high-heeled silver shoes followed with effortless ease.

Joe ran a finger round his collar. Old Mather was nattering about the fixture list, and as captain he had to listen, so he missed the first waltz. When he looked up, Betty was dancing with a tall, sad chap who held her too close and did the fallaway whisk, which was difficult.

The next dance, Joe told himself. He moved from Mather, and fretted through the pause between dances. Then the band struck up and he started forward—only to check when he realized that this was a tango. "Not for you, Joe," Miss Todd had said.

He had to watch Tony Tyler collect Betty and lead her into that languid yet impatient dance. She managed to look deliciously haughty while Tony aped the disdainful hidalgo, stamping his feet, flicking his fingers, flashing

When the music started he stood over Betty, very flushed and breathless. "May I?" he asked. She smiled. "Hallo, Joe," she said. "May you what?"

her sultry glances as they swivelled and dipped.

His confidence ebbing, Joe lit another cigarette, stubbed it hurriedly as the music stopped. The band fidgeted with their instruments. Then they were off, and in four strides he was standing over Betty, very flushed and already out of breath.

"May I?" he asked.

"Hallo, Joe," she said. "May you what?"

"Have this dance, of course."

"Oh—I didn't think you could." She laughed and stood up.

The moment had come, and he nearly panicked. Was it a slow quick-step or a fast fox-trot? Why the devil didn't they announce the dances?

He settled for a quick-step, pausing for eternity while he tried to pick up the beat. Betty smiled and said: "What are we waiting for, Joe?" Then they were moving. Quarter turn, progressive *chasse*, repeat, then blithely into the tricky lock step and——

"Sorry," Joe gasped. The fool in front had come back on him. The collision, although slight, put him right off beat.

"Start again," Betty said kindly. "And you don't have to scrag me."

His grip had tightened until he was practically lifting her off the floor. He collided with another couple, tore Betty away and hurled her into a reverse turn, with himself galloping backwards along the line of dance.

"We'll be out of the hall in a moment," Betty said. She looked pale.

Joe achieved a fabulous spin turn, but a small table with an ashtray on it went flying. Over Betty's head he saw old Mather and several of the committee craning forward, as tense as when he had taken the penalty kick that put the team into the third round. Other dancers were now giving him room, except for one couple so lost in one another that they had no premonition of danger until the cyclone swept past.

Avoiding them, Joe had gone into another spin, and he couldn't get out of it. The situation was beyond him. A human peg-top, gyrating faster and faster, he cut diagonally across the floor. Tony Tyler shouted: "Whoa, Joe!" and swung his partner to safety. The band loomed up. The man with the trombone was standing out in front, and in the nick of time he pulled in the slide.

"Joe, for mercy's sake!" Betty panted.

Finding his right foot free, Joe feathered frantically into a quarter turn, nearly losing her as the impetus shot her away from him. Tightening his grip, he managed a natural turn that ought to have acted as brake, but it carried him into the back lock with a running finish.

Little Bert Bailey and his partner were in the way, and it seemed to Joe that they might just as well hand in their chips, but the team's nippiest winger could make rings round most heavyweight backs, and escaped with no more than a grazing kick. "Foul, ref!" he yelled. Some of the crowd on the touchlines were cheering and Betty said: "Oh, Joe! Oh, Joe!"

Joe wished the floor would open and swallow him. With a great effort he dug in his heels and skidded to the bar as the music stopped.

"You'd better let me go," Betty said, in a small voice. "I don't think I'll fall over."

Scarlet in the face, he escorted her to her table. "May I fetch you some coffee?" he pleaded. "Or an iced lemonade?"

"A large brandy," Tony Tyler suggested, and everyone laughed.

Joe gave Betty a stiff little bow and walked away. As he crossed the floor, he saw the trombonist point him out excitedly to the pianist. Old Mather joined him and said: "There are fourteen for the coach tomorrow, Joe, sharp at one thirty——" but he walked straight on to the club balcony, where the cold air stung his flaming face.

He knew he had made a fool of himself as never before, not even when he had shot into his own goal after a kick on the head. There had been excuses for that, but none for this. He had lost his head and the girl he loved.

As he wiped the sweat of humiliation from his brow, someone offered a cigarette.

"Feeling bad?" Tony Tyler asked. "What on earth made you do it?"

"I'm not used to a crowded floor," Joe growled.

"Well, you soon cleared it, old chap."

"If you say much more, Tony, you'll be sticking your neck out," he snapped.

"No offence meant—I daresay I'd make an ass of myself if I tried to play soccer."

Tony sauntered off, grinning. Joe thought he'd better go home early, to be fit for tomorrow's match. But the music had started again, and it tormented him. Through the windows he could see Tony and Betty. They were laughing—probably at him. She would think he'd run away, if he didn't go in.

BETTY seemed to turn her head away as he entered. Bert Bailey pretended to hobble and cracked: "Send him off, ref!" The trombonist played a deep, neighing note.

Joe turned his back on the dance and watched the card players without seeing them. He'd stay for twenty minutes, to show them he didn't care a damn, then he'd clear off and write to Miss Todd that he was through.

He felt a touch on his arm.

"May I, Joe?" Betty said.

He stared down at her. The band was playing a waltz, and she was waiting as if she wanted him to dance. "It's a ladies' excuse-me," she explained. "Come on, Joe, or they'll think you've turned me down."

He couldn't believe it. He made a false start, on the wrong beat, but she checked him and put him right.

"Just drift along and I'll try to follow," she said, smiling. "I was hoping you'd come back."

He forgot his feet. As if Miss Todd were guiding him from afar, they moved mechanically, going through the routines she had drilled into them. A reverse turn, closed change, a turn to the right, whisk, syncopated *chasse*, spin, into the reverse again.

"You *can* dance," Betty marvelled.

Suddenly Joe's feet felt as light as two feathers, and so did his head. "Oh, I need more practice," he heard himself saying. "I wonder if you'd come to the Blue Jay with me on Wednesday. The floor there isn't bad, I hear."

Betty gave him a long, level look. "You can't dance as well as that, Joe, and if I went with you, what would your girl say?"

"My girl?" he echoed.

"Tony Tyler says he passes you every Thursday evening, cycling to your date in Meade. Tony says she's a blonde."

"Oh, does he," Joe made a footfault which he hastily corrected. "I've been wondering why you haven't been so friendly. If that's what you think, why did you ask *me* to dance?"

"You looked so upset after our last." She hesitated. "It was rather awful, wasn't it?"

"Terrible," he admitted. "I shall have to tell Iris Todd. She's my girl in Meade. She's forty, and she's been teaching me dancing."

Betty manoeuvred him into a promenade position. She wanted to hear more about this. "Dancing lessons?" she said. "Why?"

Joe promenaded her right off the floor, sat her at a table away from the crowd, and told her he had learned to dance because he loved her. "But I'll never be as good at it as Tony," he said.

"Tony is a wonderful partner—for dancing," she said. "But dancing isn't everything."

Joe could have kissed her, but Tony Tyler joined them, holding out a hand to Betty.

"My dance, I think."

"Think again," said Joe. "Run away, Tony. Betty and I are sitting this one out."

He had a lot to say to her, and she listened with a tender light in her eyes. THE END

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BEGINS IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK

After escaping from jail Dennis Stafford posed as a textile buyer. He visited mills ordering rolls of cloth on credit

Anthony Hawkes was Stafford's partner in a Newcastle textile firm. Clients were reassured by his air of quiet prosperity

THE WIDE BOYS WHO HAD THE NORTH ON A STRING

by W. E. ARMSTRONG

Throughout Britain the hunt was on for two jailbreakers. Nobody suspected the gay young men behind Tyneside's breezy new business

How about this little line? Two shillings a yard, one and six for cash. Mr. Gerald Aubrey Hutton opened his brief case and fished out a rectangle of flowered cretonne.

The gentleman with him, a buyer for an important manufacturing and "make-up" firm in Newcastle upon Tyne, took the sample—or "swatch" or "feeler" as it is known in the trade—and gave it a somewhat incredulous rub between finger and thumb.

"Eh!" he gasped. "Have they *pinched* it?"

Mr. Hutton smiled indulgently. This wasn't the only occasion he knew when a buyer refused to believe his ears at the expense of his fingers.

"My directors," he explained in a now familiar formula, "have considerable capital and are anxious for a quick turnover."

"Well, they'll get it here," was the brisk reply. "We'll take a hundred pieces of this."

Mr. Hutton made out the invoice, was assured that the cheque for £375 would follow on delivery of the cloth and made his way, pardonably pleased, into Tyneside's wintry gloom.

This was Friday, February 8, and the order he had just taken brought his total sales for the day to some £700. For only two days' work a week and at three per cent commission plus expenses, he rightly thought he was on a pretty good thing. It was true that in more than ten years' experience of selling textiles Mr. Hutton had never been in a position to offer such excellent cloth at quite such low prices; but in ten years of experience he had never worked for quite such a peculiar firm as Onalbourne Limited, for which, in the last three weeks and in the dead season, he had sold stock to the value of more than £4,000.

Peculiar, that is, in the sense of being eccentric, and eccentric only in that Onalbourne's methods of doing business had rarely, perhaps never, been tried in conservative Newcastle. People there went about commerce, as Mr. Hutton—a Geordie born and bred—well knew, with a dour and painstaking dignity. The breathless methods of the tycoon were foreign to their temperament; foreign, and a little distasteful. That didn't mean that they couldn't spot a bargain as quickly as the next man. Money is still money on the Tyne, and when thousands of yards of good Manchester cloth and hundreds of dozens of pillow slips, sheets and tablecloths were offered for sale at almost half their marketable value, dignity could be given a day off.

Not that Mr. Hutton had ever had any reserves about the men who employed him. A vigorous and enterprising thirty-three himself, he had every sympathy with their gay drive and audacity, their determination to pursue the invigorating principle of small profits and quick returns. It was young, it was new, it was imaginative; it might even be—indeed it gave every impression of being—perfectly sound. And it was certainly stimulating. Why, only that morning Mr. Paul Lewis had sent him out with instructions of a typical bravura.

"We want a killing, Gerry," he said with his

The door of the Newcastle office run by Stafford and Hawkes. In a brisk ten weeks of business they took thousands of pounds

Dancer Eileen Cook was the girl Stafford left behind when he fled. The police kept watch on her—and traced him in the West Indies

quick, adventurous smile. "Slash the prices right down to the deck," and he had personally pencilled in the new, irresistible figures on the samples.

A killing! Right down to the deck! Here was a racy idiom to enliven the drab jargon of the trade. What a couple they were, Messrs. Paul Lewis and William Whelby. Unconventional, perhaps, but they got things done and paid their agent munificently—and on the nail.

As, on that Friday evening, he cruised his van up the Great North Road towards the suburb of Jesmond and his family, Mr. Hutton hoped that his pleasant and profitable association with Onalbourne and its energetic directors might persist indefinitely. But in this he was to be disappointed; for in the course of the next two days events unknown to him or his philosophy took place, ensuring that nobody would do business with either Mr. Lewis or Mr. Whelby for a long time to come.

Only Mr. Whelby, whom Mr. Hutton had come to think of as the junior partner, was in Onalbourne's office on the following Monday. Mr. Lewis was in Manchester, where, he had said, he would do some buying at the mills. Miss Patricia Boult, the firm's young secretary, was tapping away in the next room, the usual voluminous pile of mail lay on the directors' table, and the many bulky bales of cloth which Mr. Hutton would sell, or had already sold, were stacked neatly against the walls.

ALL this was normal. What was rather surprising was Mr. Whelby's presence in the office so early in the morning and, further, the clearly febrile state of his nerves. For the junior partner, with his dark grey suit, his chastely colourless linen, his spectacles, his courtesy and his winning passion for self effacement, was habitually the calmest of men. Now he was pacing up and down, biting his nails and occasionally addressing Miss Boult in regrettable language.

"Chicken feed!" was his sombre reaction to the high figure of Mr. Hutton's latest sales. "Why aren't they buying, Gerry? What the hell's the matter with them?"

Mr. Hutton explained soothingly that this was always a quiet time in the trade. But, he added, things would surely improve in a few days. To this Mr. Whelby replied that they'd better, or it might be too bloody late, a reflection that Mr. Hutton didn't understand.

He began to understand it better the next morning, when he walked into Onalbourne's at ten o'clock. Miss Boult was delighted to see him. Nobody, she complained, had put their nose in the office since the morning before, and the telephone had been ringing repeatedly. Most of these calls were from buyers in Newcastle, but there were several—with charges reversed—from Mr. Lewis in the Grosvenor Hotel, Manchester, who had seemingly a great need to contact both Mr. Whelby and Mr. Hutton urgently. The phone, in fact, rang again almost at once, and what the agent heard on it gave him, as he said afterwards, quite a turn. The call was from Mr. Lewis.

"Listen carefully, Gerry," he said. "I believe that heel Whelby has done a mickey with the dough."

"Surely not!" cried Mr. Hutton, which on the whole was an adequate example of that strangled disbelief which escapes one when the earth suddenly begins to rock beneath one's feet.

"Yes," Mr. Lewis insisted. Followed a series of confused instructions. Mr. Lewis had a big deal coming up in Manchester. A valuable consignment of cloth would arrive in Newcastle the next day. Properly handled the *coup* was worth £5,000, but to bring it off he—Mr. Lewis—had need of money. Mr. Hutton must sell everything, *immediately*. He must also, at all costs, stop a cheque for £215 which the perfidious Whelby had drawn the day before to the credit of a Manchester mill. Meanwhile, Mr. Lewis was in a great hurry. He would telephone Mr. Hutton in the morning. And he ended with an injunction which bore the typical Lewis stamp.

"Not to worry, cock," he pleaded, "we'll make it yet."

Miss Boult now put in her little contribution to the mystery. Whelby, she said, had ordered her to detach a "pay self" cheque from the firm's book and take it to him at the Royal Turk's Head Hotel on the afternoon of the day before. There, in the hotel bar, he had made it out for £215. The cheque was manifestly forged, for cheques from this book needed both partners' signatures. From that moment she had not set eyes on Whelby again.

Miss Boult's news did nothing to lighten Mr. Hutton's forebodings. Although by this time more than a little bemused, he had no reasons to suspect Mr. Lewis. He had his orders and he loyally carried them out. He telephoned to Martins Bank, whose manager told him that there was no question of stopping the cheque without both partners' confirmation. He called up Manchester, to be informed that Mr. Lewis had that instant paid his bill and left the Grosvenor Hotel. Undaunted, he sold £150 worth—all he could—of Onalbourne's stock.

Finding no trace of Mr. Whelby at the office in the late afternoon, he hurried round to the flats in Osborne Road where his employers lived. They were locked, but Mrs. Doris Moran, the caretaker, let him in. The flats were empty, neatly destitute of all personal belongings except stacks of disused gin bottles. Finally, exhausted but still unedified, he returned home and fell into bed. From there, at 1.30 a.m. on Wednesday morning, he was summoned by police officers who thrust a fan of photographs before his eyes.

"Do you know these men?" he was asked.

"I do," replied Mr. Hutton. "They are Mr. Paul Lewis and Mr. William Whelby, my part-time employers."

"In that case," said the police, "we have news for you. Their real names are Dennis Stafford and Anthony Hawkes, criminals on the run who broke out of Wormwood Scrubs Prison, London, last November."

Mr. Hutton didn't believe it, for by now events for him had taken on the hallucinating quality of nightmare. It was not till two days later when the *Newcastle Journal* came out with the galling headline, JAIL BREAKERS FOOL A CITY, that he realized that his strange, entertaining and quite unconscious sojourn in the underworld had come to a dramatic end.

The paper, of course, exaggerated. There are 277,000 people in Newcastle and only some of these were fooled. Yet those that were—and they were fooled all of the time—were such, it could be thought, as to need to be very sure of the colour of their clients' money.

Yet this is an illusion, and not one to which crooks like Stafford and Hawkes subscribe. For they knew one fact which honest citizens need not consider deeply, and that is the astonishing part that credit plays in all business transactions.

TO the confidence trickster—and Stafford and Hawkes were "con" men—credit, if it is to pay, depends on time and charm. "Give me time," says the "con" man, "and I'll take the world for a ride." It was neither their credit nor their charm which ran out for Hawkes and Stafford in Newcastle, but their time.

They broke out on the night of November 8 last year with no visible assets but the warders' coats—stolen—which hid their prison uniforms. On the tenth, two days later, they rang the bell of Mrs. Lily Clarke's boarding house in St. Thomas Street, Newcastle.

Mrs. Clarke's judgment on her lodgers set the theme which the police were to hear *ad nauseam*.

"Charming gentlemen," she said. "So quiet and well-behaved. Real toffs and with *such* a lot of luggage."

What particularly impressed the landlady

Mrs. Lily Clarke keeps a boarding house in Newcastle. Stafford and Hawkes stayed with her for a time—as Mr. Lewis and Mr. Whelby

Reporters interview Hutton after Onalbourne's ceased business. He was engaged by Stafford and Hawkes as a salesman—and never doubted them

were the richness and extent of Mr. Lewis's wardrobe. He had three suits and a camelhair coat, expensive nylon shirts and a flowered bathrobe. His ties were eye-taking, as were his suède shoes. A real dresser. Mr. Whelby made a fainter impact. Like everyone else, Mrs. Clarke appreciated his exquisite manners. All this was made the more pleasant for Mrs. Clarke by the fact that her guests readily paid a month's lodgings in advance. The first foundation in the card house of credit was set up.

Because, as it transpired later, the partners arrived with a definite scheme of what they meant to—and could—accomplish. Newcastle was not just any port in a storm. The place had been decided on in Wormwood Scrubs.

Dennis Stafford—Paul Lewis to his Newcastle dupes—was a run-of-the-mill "wide" boy from London. Twenty-three, smallish and dark, with the brilliantined good looks of the seductive spiv, he could assume to perfection the thin, wilful grin and the soft-spoken spiel which the cinema has taught us are the romantic necessities of the glamorous "bad man." His type is to be seen at all hours dawdling in Soho and Shaftesbury Avenue, chipping their nails, sidling from group to group, appraising the latest American haberdashery and generally behaving with airs of such dynamic idleness as to make strangers up from the country inquire wonderingly: "But what do they *do*?"

The reply, in Stafford's case, was that, while officially a clerk, he "did" practically everything, but usually warehouses and stores. It was for breaking and entering one of these, receiving stolen property "done" from another and carrying a loaded revolver meanwhile that he was serving a seven-year sentence passed on him at the London sessions in July last year, three months before he decided to "do" Newcastle.

Quite the opposite of ascetic in appetite, he liked the bright lights and was a great one for the girls; more than thirty of whom, in London and on the Tyne, testified to the police on his spivvy charm. It was this predilection, which itself went hand-in-hand with an overweening vanity, that finally led to him, in his turn, getting "done."

Anthony Hawkes, ten years older than Stafford, was of a very different mould. While Mrs. Clarke and others in Newcastle indiscriminately described the pair as "gents," Hawkes, in the academic sense, really was one. He was of a good family. He had been to a public school; he was the son of a fairly distinguished officer. And he was an authentic company director, having run his own textile business in Nottingham. For running this not wisely but too well he found himself in Wormwood Scrubs with Stafford, having been sentenced at the Old Bailey to six years' imprisonment in January, 1956, on charges of causing textile goods, obtained on credit, to be delivered on false pretences for the use and benefit of A. J. Hawkes, Ltd., and of fraudulent conversion of £6,206. These being exactly the motions he went through in Newcastle, the fact bears out the theory, so useful to detectives, that small-time criminals always and fatally repeat themselves.

With antecedents such as his; Hawkes could only play the rôle of the international gentleman crook. A good actor, and apt at disguises and dressing-up, he had on various occasions brought off the confidence trick posing as a monocled cavalryman, an Irish peer, a foreign trade attaché and, of all things, a Rumanian butler.

In personality he was at Stafford's antipodes, being morose, reserved, pessimistic, excruciatingly awkward with women, and cursed with a failing which must be dangerous in the confidence trade—an inability to hold his drink.

There is evidence that the pair disliked each other deeply, yet, with all their differences, they were an ideal couple for the job in hand. Hawkes would provide the business "know how," Stafford the buoyancy and brazenness to give it effect. Neither of them could have looked forward with pleasure to the prospect of supporting the other's company for very long. The point was that it was not going to be for long. Two and a half months—unless they were "done"—was the period they set themselves. In the event, ten weeks was just too much. Accidents can happen, even in Newcastle.

From where did they obtain the initial sum of money necessary to establish financial goodwill? Nobody knows; but anyone who lives by crime will say that no jail breaker stands a chance of going un-"done" unless he is welcomed outside, and immediately, with clothes and funds. In any case, thirty-six hours were enough for Lewis and Whelby—as they must once more be temporarily called—to get sufficient of both to impress others besides Mrs. Clarke in Newcastle. Dolled up in their "executive" suits, and each with an important wad in his pocket, they spent the first few days on the Tyne in looking round.

"Looking round," although it could only have passed in a whirl, went with a swing. A sum of money was deposited in, and a business account opened with, Martins Bank in Grey Street. This was an essential first step, for here was the vital bank reference on which all textile dealings depended. Offices—two spacious first-floor rooms—were hired (and paid for in advance for two months) at 35 Pink Lane, a busy little thoroughfare convenient both for the main line railway station and the Crown Hotel, whose two bars—one Spanish, the other Olde Tudor—were to see much of the open-handed young men from London.

Modern office furniture was installed. A

Continued on page 31

Escorted by detectives, Stafford flies back from Trinidad. There he planned to start a night club and to make soft-drinks equipment

A woman of sentime

No matter what you say, sentiment and farming don't go together; never have and never will. You can be soft-hearted and go bankrupt, or you can harden your heart and make a go of it. But you have to choose.

That's what Mrs. Jessop never understood. I didn't blame her exactly—at least, I did blame her, but unfairly; sometimes she all but drove me round the bend. She hadn't been brought up to farming and you couldn't expect her, in late middle age, to change her whole outlook and take a hard-boiled attitude to, for instance, the fate of the livestock on her farm.

The cold fact is that most farm animals are tended, pampered, fed, cleaned and cared for with one object only—to be slaughtered and eaten by people in towns. That's what farming is, basically. If Mrs. Jessop didn't like it, she should have stayed out of it and kept budgerigars, run a beauty parlour, or simply lived in a flat and played bridge.

But there again I'm being unfair. She didn't buy the farm herself. Her husband got it, largely for tax purposes I suppose. Then he died and she was landed with a six hundred acre property up on the downs—sheep, cattle and corn. Even her decision not to sell it when he died was based on sentiment: he'd grown very keen on it, and she kept it going in his memory.

That was when she engaged me. With seven years' experience behind me after leaving college, I was looking for a job with some responsibility, and thought myself extremely fortunate to secure such a plum. Little did I know! What Mrs. Jessop needed wasn't a farm manager but a magician who could run a home for lame ducks at a profit. Like many rich widows, she wanted to indulge her foibles but she didn't want to pay for the privilege. She squealed about financial pinches as loudly as any money-grubbing business man or union leader.

"But look what it's costing," she would cry. "I can't possibly afford a new tractor"—or baler, or mower, or whatever it was.

"You can afford a new car," I pointed out.

"But I've *got* to have a new car. Mine's worn out."

"It's the same with the tractor," I replied. And could have added, but didn't: "The tractor produces something useful—it's the tool of a trade. Your car's a luxury." But, of course, she didn't see it like that.

However, the monthly struggle with Mrs. Jessop, when she went through the accounts, was all in the day's work. A farm manager is lucky if he doesn't have trouble with his boss in some shape or form. It was her interference with the day-to-day work that got me down.

First of all it was the old cows. We ran a smallish dairy herd which Mr. Jessop had started partly as a hobby, to breed up high-class pedigree stock. When I took over, I forgot about the pedigrees but kept the herd on, and indeed enlarged it, on a strictly commercial basis.

Well, there comes a time in the life of every cow when she's too old for economic milk production and she has to go. She goes to market and the butchers buy her for dogmeat, or the manufacturers for processed meat of some kind.

It seems hard, I agree—a lifetime of patient, plodding milk production and no pensioned ease to look forward to when her day is done. But farming is a business, as I said, and no farmer on earth could afford to keep a lot of bovine pensioners eating costly food.

It all arose about a cow called Chilton Corncrake 14th, which had been the apple of the late Mr. Jessop's eye. He had paid a heavy price for her and, to tell the truth, she'd been a disappointing cow; but, anyway, the time had now come to get rid of her.

This was just when all that fuss arose in the papers about exporting cattle to the Continent, and the bad conditions they had to endure. I quite agree that that was wrong. Most of the old cows sold in the market were ending up that way, but what could I do?

"You're a wicked, cruel man!" Mrs. Jessop railed—she was apt to get a bit hysterical. "You're practically a murderer. In fact, you *will* be a murderer if you send poor Corncrake away. I won't have it, I tell you."

"All right," I said. "Suppose we keep Corncrake and half a dozen other old and sub-standard cows. What are you going to say next month when you look at the accounts and see we're a bit farther into the red? You keep telling me to cut down expenses——"

"And another thing," said Mrs. Jessop, who was as slippery as an eel when you tried to corner her, "I won't have my animals shut up in cages like beasts in a zoo. You know I don't approve of zoos."

"What on earth do you mean?" I asked.

"Those poor bulls. You shut them up in those pens night and day, winter and summer. They never have a chance to enjoy the grass and live a natural life. They're simply prisoners. You must let them out into the fields."

"All right, I'll have them tethered," I replied. "I've kept them in because they get bothered by the fly and because we're short of labour. But I'll see to it that——"

"Tethered?" Mrs. Jessop cried. "There you go again! Why should they be tethered? Why can't they have their freedom like any other animal?"

"There are three bulls," I said. "If you let them out together, they'll fight."

"Then put them in separate fields."

"Mrs. Jessop," I said patiently, "every field on this place is being used for something. We have, though you mightn't think it, a farming plan. I haven't got three fields doing nothing, each ready to receive one bull. And for another thing, our fences are weak. At present we're too short of labour to put them to rights. Probably the bulls would break out."

"You must think of something," Mrs. Jessop retorted. "That's what you're here for. That's what I pay you for. You must let those poor bulls have their freedom. And you're not to murder dear old Corncrake. I hope that's clear."

It was clear all right. For the hundredth time I all but said: "Very well, and take a month's notice from today."

I should have, really. But one thing made the job possible, and that was that Mrs. Jessop very often went away. She'd disappear sometimes for months on end and then everything would run smoothly.

Besides, by now the men knew about Mrs. Jessop's crankiness as well as I did, and between us we conspired to keep her prying nose out of most things, or, at any rate, to pull the wool over her eyes. For instance, although she made such a parade of loving her animals, I don't think she really knew which was which. There was another cow rather like Corncrake 14th to look at and I had every hope of passing her off, eventually, as Mrs. Jessop's old-age pensioner.

But I was in a fix about those bulls. Actually, two of them were Herefords, which are even-tempered animals, and I thought I'd risk their fighting and put them together in one paddock. The only field I could possibly spare was on the boundary with our neighbour, Tom Saxton, but I sent a couple of the men to strengthen the fence, led out the two Herefords and hoped for the best.

THE old girl struck a bad patch just then. She had a friend staying who was an active member of three or four societies which look after the interests of dumb animals. This woman egged her on.

Don't think I'm against these societies—I think they're badly needed and do a good job. I even subscribe to one myself. But their object is to prevent careless, feckless and callous people from neglecting and ill-treating their pets. They weren't intended to interfere with farming. No sane farmer ill-treats his animals, if only for the mercenary reason that a neglected beast won't produce lots of milk, or fatten quickly, or pull its weight in any other way. But that is what people like Mrs. Jessop won't see.

After the bulls, it was the turn of the pigs. In every good litter of pigs there's at least one little runt pig, which goes by a different name in different parts of the country. With us, they call it a rennick.

Well, unless you have endless time to play about with them, it just doesn't pay to keep the rennicks. Very often they die, anyway. If they don't, they're nothing but a nuisance; they don't fatten and nobody will buy them in the market, and they're a dead loss. So I always

Continued on page 34

A very angry girl came towards me. "Your bulls broke out," she stormed. "Our barley field looks like it's had a bulldozer through it"

ent

Pigs, cows, bulls, rats—she had so many four-legged friends. Her farm was a paradise for animals . . . and a nightmare for me

by ELSPETH HUXLEY

ILLUSTRATED BY HANTS

In a narrow Rochester street, Basil Rogers explains a new by-pass plan which will divert the heavy traffic

A Lancashire petition bearing half a million signatures passes through London. The carriers boycotted the Strand as a protest because the widening work has dragged on for 120 years

Fighting for the motorist's money

by ANTHONY HANCOX

"Britain desperately needs new roads," today's highway men tell the government. "Hand back that £500 million a year"

DRIVING his car along the Great North Road one morning in March this year, Basil Rogers was relieved to see a horseman dressed as Dick Turpin. Rogers, who is secretary of the Roads Campaign Council, had hired Peter Munt, a film stunt man, to do the legendary London-to-York ride in reverse, carrying two parcels tied to his saddle. The parcels contained a petition demanding better roads. They were to be delivered to the House of Commons.

"I wanted to make sure that my highwayman was safely on his way," says Rogers. "That petition had 63,000 signatures. Also, I was rather worried about having someone ride a horse on such a busy road. In case of accidents I had insured Munt for £10,000."

Munt said that all was going well. Suddenly, as he swung out of the saddle, 530 sheets covered with signatures cascaded into the roadway. Dodging on and off the road among the traffic, Rogers retrieved them all—except one which was carried off on the radiator of a lorry.

When they examined the broken parcel they saw that sweat from the horse had soaked the brown paper and caused it to tear. "Turpin was supposed to carry the petition all the way to London, but I had to cheat a little," says Rogers. "I took the sheets by car to the next village and got them rewrapped. Munt followed at a discreet distance."

A handsome six-footer who was once an actor, Rogers is a full-time crusader for better roads in Britain. For three years the Roads Campaign Council, which is sponsored by twelve organizations connected with road transport, has urged greater government spending on roads. The plan which it wants carried out is the one presented by the Ministry of Transport in 1946 and shelved by Sir Stafford Cripps, the "austerity" Chancellor, in 1947. It proposed eight hundred miles of super-motorways, with "flyovers" and "flyunders," and the modernizing of 1,700 miles of trunk roads. The council also wants additional schemes, such as a tunnel under the Tyne at Newcastle and by-passes at Doncaster and Stamford.

The bill, says the council, would be £750 million in ten years; it should be paid out of the £500 million a year which the government gets in road taxation. By contrast, the government announced a new roads programme in July this year under which it will authorize, in the next four years, the spending of £240 million at unspecified times in the future.

To enlist public backing for the council's campaign, Rogers travels ten thousand miles a year from his Westminster offices to give speeches and lectures which are followed up with inspection tours, film shows, exhibitions and anything he can devise that will keep roads in the public's mind.

In the village where the parcel was rewrapped Rogers found that the children had lined the main street to greet Turpin, but had to go back to school without seeing him because he was late. He heard one mother complain.

Sensing that good publicity was turning to bad, Rogers hurried to the school. "This is virtually a history lesson passing right by your door," he told the headmaster. Won't you let the children out for ten minutes?" The headmaster agreed and there were youthful cheers for the "highwayman" when eventually he trotted into the main street.

In a campaign covering twenty-four Lancashire towns the council collected half a million signatures. Rogers wanted a sedan chair in which to deliver the petition and his search for it took him to a London tavern which used one as a telephone box. Unfortunately, the floor had been removed from it. He traced another to a film studio, but it was a "prop" imitation, almost too heavy to lift. Finally he began telephoning museums, and located a genuine chair in Maidstone.

"I put a Lancashire lass in it and had her carried from the Savoy Hotel to the House of Commons bearing the petition," says Rogers.

Every month Rogers helps to plan the campaign at meetings of the council, its executive committee and a working party. At one of the meetings he was instructed to buy time on commercial television to show a film about new Continental roads. He booked it to follow August Bank Holiday, when motorists would have the frustrations of bumper-to-bumper journeys freshly in mind.

A few days before the programme he was told that the Independent Television Authority had banned the film on political grounds. By then

Continued on page 30

Greek Fire

by ***WINSTON GRAHAM***

ILLUSTRATED BY FANCETT

Now Vanbrugh was fleeing for his life. . . . And every step took him farther from Anya

TAKING the phone, Vanbrugh heard the unmistakable dry voice of Madame Lindos. "Peter, you must go. The people who called for you on Tuesday night are coming for you again." The police! Vanbrugh felt a qualm of panic. Not for himself, but for Anya. . . .

Vanbrugh was wanted for a murder he had not committed—the murder of the E.M.O. party leader, George Lascou. Anya had been a close friend of Lascou, but now she and Vanbrugh were deeply in love. For two days she had hidden him in her Athens flat—and not only from the police. Jon Manos, E.M.O.'s new boss, wanted the letters Vanbrugh took from Lascou's home the night he died, letters that showed the tie-up between E.M.O. and Communism. He would use any methods to get them. . . .

A Spanish dancer, Juan Tolosa, had come to Greece to sell the letters. His own brother, Philip, betrayed him, and E.M.O. thugs had killed him in the street. It was Tolosa's wife, Maria, who had slain Lascou, in revenge. Vanbrugh had helped her to escape. And E.M.O.'s friends in the police were fixing the crime on him. . . .

Now he listened intently to his old friend, Sophia Lindos. "In five minutes," she said, "a taxi will draw up at the door. Be ready. God go with you."

Vanbrugh spoke, but she had rung off. He put the phone back and turned to Anya, who was standing, watching him.

"I'm on my way," he said.

FINAL INSTALMENT

Escape In A Taxi

HE fished out the old gladstone bag with his own clothes still unjettisoned, put on his spectacles, hat, talking to her. . . .

"Don't worry about me. Clear these things. Wash the glasses or break them. If they——"

"Peter, what when you get in the taxi? Did she say nothing?"

"It's up to me. And looking after yourself is up to you. If they find no traces of me here, they can do nothing to you. Understand? Nothing. So don't come down with me. Cigarette ends, remember. The newspapers on the piano. Look round the bedroom——"

"What do I care about myself? How shall I hear from you? How shall I know you're safe?"

"No news, good news. But I warn you of one thing. If I get out, you'll hear as soon as I can let you know. You'll never get clear of me. Never. Understand?"

She said indistinctly: "Food, wine; take

Vanbrugh turned to run into the sea. A policeman stood up quickly and shot him in the back

something with you in that bag. Here, give it to me. . . ."

While he unlocked the outer door and peered cautiously up and down the stairs, she flew to the kitchen, found a small bottle of brandy—that and half a chicken and a piece of cheese and a stick of bread went in on top of the clothes. He was back at the window, looking out. There was still no sign or sound of the police. But Mandraki, Manos's man, was there now, leaning against a wall about thirty yards away on the opposite side.

He took the bag from her and they went to the door.

"No farther. Wash those plates. Darling, darling, I must go."

"Remember me," she said.

They kissed. He said: "Anya. . . . Goodbye."

She kissed him but couldn't speak. Then he was gone, pattering down the stone stairs. . . .

Wait at the door. How long to wait at the door? Four minutes exactly had passed since putting down the receiver. No taxi. Street empty. So it was a question of waiting. But which would come first, the taxi or the police car?

Every second made danger more extreme. If the police came first, he was caught without a hope. Anya's risk was increased, too, by this wait. They must accuse her if they found him here, on her doorstep. Better if Sophia Lindos hadn't made any plan, left it to him. At least now he would be on his own. He wasn't afraid of Mandraki. Shake him off. Or push him under a bus.

A gipsy was coming down the street leading a brown bear on a chain. When he stopped, people at once began to gather round to watch. A crowd was the perfect cover, but this crowd was too far away. But for Mandraki, of course, he could have gone across and waited with the watching people, inconspicuous and safe.

To stand a chance he *must* go; it was suicide to stand waiting in this doorway. . . .

AN elderly black taxi with yellow artillery wheels and yellow doors came up from the opposite direction. It slowed and almost stopped, moved on and came to a stop in front of the gipsy. The driver was peering up at the numbers above the doors. Vanbrugh slid across the pavement in one streak and got in.

The young man driving had curly brown hair and was wearing a boiler suit.

"Monsieur Vanbrugh?"

Vanbrugh nodded and slammed the door and fell into the back as the taxi jerked violently and screamed out into the centre of the street. He didn't look out of the back window but lay on the seat until the taxi had turned twice and was making downhill towards the centre of the town.

When he looked behind there was nothing following. He leaned forward and said to the driver in Greek: "Thank you."

The driver grinned and switched down the "free" flag. "Think nothing of it."

"Where am I going?"

"Nafplion. Madame Lindos said ask for Constantinos Salamis in the square beside the cinema."

"We can't go all the way there in your taxi."

"It's not my taxi. I stole it from the rank while the driver had gone to ease himself. Soon, when we have gone a little farther, I will get out and leave the automobile to you. What you do with it then is your own concern; I am glad I shall not know. You are right that this taxi will be noticeable if you drive in it all the way to Nafplion."

"It will be noticeable before then," said Vanbrugh, thinking of Mandraki.

"There is a train leaves the station for Nafplion at six."

"And the station will be very carefully watched by the police."

"Maybe. But there are other stations. The train stops at Eleusis and at Megara. They are not so many miles out of Athens, and I do not suppose they will be picketed."

Vanbrugh glanced behind. It was impossible to be absolutely sure in this busy street, but he could see nothing suspicious.

The young Greek mopped the back of his neck. "Do you know your way out of Athens?"

"Yes."

"Then I will turn down at this next corner and leave you. It is best to do it in the centre where it will not be conspicuous."

They swerved into a side street and stopped. The driver jumped out and Vanbrugh slid into his seat. He felt for the pedals, re-started the engine then moved out of the traffic and drove off. . . .

This was the same road, so far, as he and Anya had taken to Delphi, cutting across the peninsula through Daphni. He was well away from the railway line now, but the two ways would converge at Eleusis, as the young Greek said. Already one or two people were staring at the old taxi. Not that this mattered much—people always did stare in Greece; but if one of them remembered. . . .

Almost in sight of Daphni he saw a side lane turning sharp to his left and climbing up into the narrow mountain range separating the road from the sea. He swung the car up it and changed down, grinding the unfamiliar gears. The old taxi began to lurch and grunt up the hill.

It was half a mile before he came to cover, and he beat the guts out of the engine getting there. He drove the car off the road, lurching between two boulders, and grounded it hard in the middle of a dried-up river bed. When he got out he found it was hidden from the road. He tipped his own clothes out of his bag, dropping Anya's bread, rolled the clothing in a ball and hid it under a rock, retrieved the bread and shut his bag.

He ran back as far as the main road, then walked more slowly through Daphni. People in doorways stared at him, but unspeculatively. Once out of the town he went on more quickly. It was ten minutes to six and his chances of catching the train at Eleusis—even if he decided to take the risk—were small. Eight or ten kilometres yet.

Roads were so few that no vehicle going in this direction could be making for anywhere but Eleusis; but when a bus came up five minutes later it was marked Megara, which was twenty kilometres beyond. He crowded into it with the others. He stood near the back between two black-dressed women, one with a basket with live fowls. A man in a sombrero hemmed him in in front and a boy with a dog rubbed against his legs. Everything smelled of garlic and old sweat.

The bus jolted into movement and the conductor fought his way through to get his fares. Vanbrugh took a ticket to Megara. He worried for Anya, how she had faced the police when they came; what she was doing now.

THE bus lurched into the narrow streets of Eleusis at ten past six. It stopped near the waterfront while sixteen people fought their way off and another twenty got on.

A hand touched his arm. "Are you from Argos, *patrioti*?"

He looked down at the man with the sombrero, who was peering up at him. "No, from Lavrion." It was his usual reply, to pick the opposite side of Greece.

"Well, well, I thought your clothes came from Argos. I am a tailor there." He looked more like a brigand with his fat body, a nose jutting like a scimitar from under his hat, a stubble of beard.

"It may be that they did," said Vanbrugh. "My own suit was damaged in an accident and I bought this second-hand in Athens."

"Ah, that explains it. The *koukouláriko* comes of course from Kalamai, and I rather think. . . . You'll pardon me." The Greek put out a black-nailed finger and thumb and felt the edge of the cloth. "Yes, that's it. There was not much of this heavier type, and it was made up locally."

Everyone in the bus lurched as it began to move again. A faint, welcome air stirred the heat and the smell.

"Are you going to Argos tonight?" Vanbrugh said.

"I hope to. I have something to pick up at Megara and then I intend to catch the diesel train."

Vanbrugh said: "I too am going to Argos—or near there. I am a radio mechanic. I have business ultimately in Nafplion."

"Well, the train will take you there tonight. You will be there by ten. Permit me to introduce myself. My name is Diomedes Cos."

Vanbrugh gave a name he had used during the war, and the bus lurched on. Megara loomed up, climbing its two low hills. They rattled past the squat hovels on the outskirts, then lurched through the town and came to a stop in the main square.

"The station is over there," said Cos. "I shall hope to join you in a few minutes." He went off across the square on fat purposive legs.

Soldiers here, talking in listless groups, squatting around some sort of a gambling game, sitting on the walls. Vanbrugh walked to the station. He was in time for the train. There were a few people on the platform and a number around the booking office. No evidence of police; but one couldn't be sure. He didn't go in.

There was a kiosk near, and he bought a *baklava* cake and a magazine about radio. He was still reading when Diomedes Cos came hurrying back across the square with a big parcel under his arm. Vanbrugh followed the tailor into the station and caught him up at the booking office. They bought tickets. There were two men in the booking office but neither had the interest to raise his eyes.

On the platform Cos said: "You

A MEAL TO REMEMBER

by Eric Coates

YEARS ago, when I was a scholar at the Royal Academy of Music, I and three of my fellow students formed a string quartet. We called ourselves the Celtic String Quartet and were very thrilled when we obtained our first engagement to play in a village hall in Surrey.

All might have gone well had I not caught a bad cold, which always transforms my usually poor appetite into one that is practically insatiable. It was very cold in the train as we wended our way through Surrey, and my sneezes and my hunger grew worse with every mile.

By the time we arrived I was starving and, although we were late, I refused to perform unless I had a snack. I dragged my protesting friends into the first inn we saw.

My snack developed into a feast when I caught sight of some Cornish pasties behind the bar. They were enormous and so delicious that I ate three before I finally agreed to leave. The other students, naturally, had been fortifying themselves with beer so that by now we were all in high spirits.

The concert hall turned out to be an icy schoolroom. We took our seats on the improvised platform with great dignity, but the audience was by this time obviously restless.

This rather unnerved us and when our leader raised his violin bow to play the unaccompanied opening theme, he was so jumpy that he snapped his E-string.

We held a whispered consultation over our instruments, but none of us had brought a spare string. The violinist disappeared behind the stage to see if he had one in his case, while the rest of us silently waited on the platform. One minute passed . . . two . . . three. . . .

We suggested to the second fiddle that he should find out what was happening. He went and did not return. Then the 'cellist decided to investigate and I was left alone on the platform—nervous, hungry again and ready to be overtaken by a violent bout of sneezing. The audience was now distinctly impatient and I could face them no longer. I, too, left the platform.

I found my friends kneeling on the floor of the cloakroom, frantically searching for a spare string. By now the murmurs in the hall had become alarmingly loud.

There was only one sensible thing to do and I suggested it. Throwing everything hastily into our bags, we crept on tip-toe through the back entrance of the school and ran as fast as we could towards the railway station.

I just had time to collect a fourth Cornish pasty, which I ate in the train on the way back to London. And was I glad of it!

Here is a recipe for Cornish pasties

Ingredients (for four people): ¼ lb. shortcrust pastry dough, ½ lb. lean raw steak or mutton, ¼ lb. raw potatoes, 1 tablespoon raw chopped onion, 2 tablespoons stock or water, salt and pepper.

Mince or finely chop the meat. Peel the potatoes and cut them into half-inch dices. Mix the meat, potato and onion with the stock and seasoning.

Roll out the pastry thinly and, using a saucer, cut into rounds about five inches in diameter. On each round place a tablespoon of the meat mixture, damp the edges with cold water and fold the pastry over to form a ridge.

Press the edges gently together and flute with the fingers.

Brush the pasties with a beaten egg and stand upright on a greased baking tray.

Bake for ten minutes in a hot oven (425 degrees F. or Regulo 7). Reduce the heat to 375 degrees—Regulo 4, and cook for forty minutes until meat is quite tender and the pastry turns golden brown.

see, there was just time. The train is signalled."

There were only two carriages, connected with a continuous passage down the centre. There were a few seats and they got two with their backs to the engine near the middle of the train.

As they ran into Corinth station twilight was already clustering over the lower hills. Vanbrugh saw two policemen walking slowly along the platform, peering into the train. Vanbrugh talked to Cos while the policemen went past.

The train began to moan again, and moved off. Vanbrugh leaned back and slowly allowed himself to relax. He bit into the almond cake. It was very sweet and rather dry. He wondered if Anya was all right.

Through the rest of the journey he talked and dozed. They stopped two or three times at tiny wayside stations. The Greek tailor talked animatedly to a girl opposite him who, young and pretty though she was, already had the beginnings of a dark moustache.

The train hooted and began to slow again. "I leave you here, *patrioti*," said Cos, suddenly. "In a little while now you will be in Nafplion. Remember the restaurant I recommended. And when you want silk cloth like that again. . . ."

Vanbrugh shook hands with the tailor. The train stopped and his friend got out. Many people were leaving the train here, and the guard said there would be a ten-minute stop, so Vanbrugh got out and walked slowly along the platform, stretching his legs.

As he did so he saw two men making for the waiting train. They were not in uniform, but you couldn't mistake them. They stopped at the centre door of the train and one of them drew back and glanced up and down so that he could keep the whole train in view. He had his hand in his pocket. The other man got on the train.

The man at the barrier was snatching tickets as the people went through. There did not appear to be anyone with him, anyone watching. Vanbrugh went through.

Outside the station were dim street lights and a narrow rutted square. A man in a taxi, seeing him better dressed than most, called out to him but he hunched his shoulders and went by. It seemed a long walk but he did not look round again. Twenty steps to the corner . . . ten . . . five. A long street. People were spreading out, this way and that, giving him less chance of cover. A darker street to his right led back in the direction of the railway lines. He took it.

He got to Nafplion just after midnight. He walked all the way. He had left his bag on the train. It held nothing of value except the food and brandy that Anya had put in; but for the police, if they identified it with him, it was a proof he was in the neighbourhood and only a step ahead of them.

The town was still lighted. Cafés were open and music came from one or two. He passed the bus station, and found the cinema.

"Constantinos Salamis?" he said to a passer-by.

The first did not hear him, but the second pointed back to a lighted doorway. It was a *taverna*, and music came from it. He went in and groped a way among smoke and feet and talk and the braying of an accordion; found a seat, slumped into it.

In the middle of a group three men were prancing round one other who, middle-aged and thin and bald, was twisting himself into wild contortions and leaping into the air while the audience roared and clapped in time. Everybody had had plenty to drink.

"Sir?" A slim, dark young man had come to the table, clearing an empty mug and wiping the table.

"Have you food?"

"No, sir."

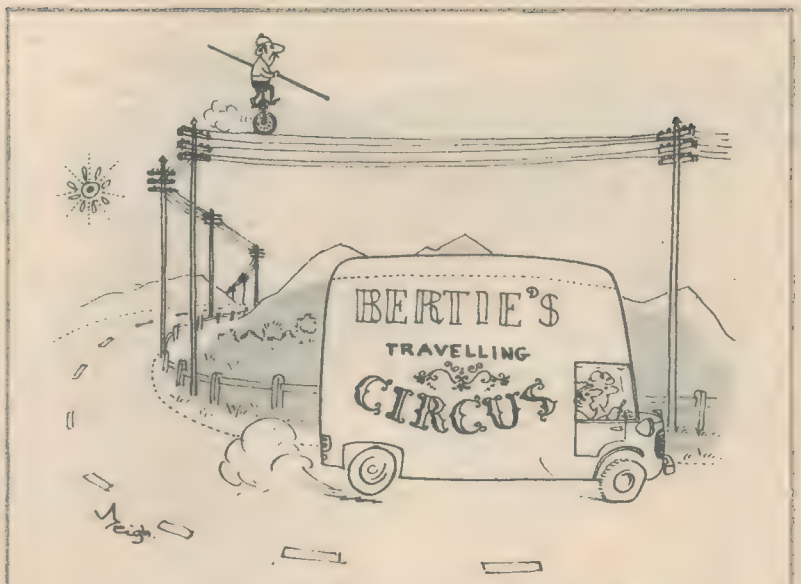
"Wine, then. And I want to see Monsieur Constantinos Salamis."

"I am Constantinos Salamis."

Vanbrugh glanced at his neighbours. But they were all watching the dance and roaring witticisms and advice.

"Madame Lindos has sent me."

The young man bent to wipe the



"Such a pity we couldn't find room for Costelli"

table again. "I do not think we can serve you."

"Why not?"

"We were not expecting you until tomorrow, and—it is difficult."

"I can pay."

"So would we, if we were caught. It is not the money."

"Then I'll go."

"No, wait. I'll bring you the wine."

When Salamis came back he said: "If you are hungry there is this cold *katsiki*. It is all we have."

"Thanks."

"And stay a while. This is a bad night. We will see what we can do."

The cold kid, helped down with strong red *retsina*, had a tonic effect. He began to recover, to look around.

Salamis came back. "When you go out," he muttered, "go to the back door. You will be let in."

As soon as he had finished, Vanbrugh paid his bill and left. This *taverna* was just the sort of place the police would come to. The sooner he was out of sight the better.

MADAME SALAMIS said: "He must stay here tonight. There is not much risk and we can do no less."

Salamis shook his head. "I have seen too much of this during the war to risk it all again—my business, my wife, my baby son, even for Madame Lindos whom we owe so much to. I will take risks, but not by keeping him here. That is too much. Let me think. There are better places to hide."

"It's not merely hiding," said Vanbrugh. "I want to get away."

"Oh, I think that is the lesser part. Carlos has the boat and he thinks nothing of being away a week. No, it is not that. It is keeping you until tomorrow night when the boat has the right excuse to go."

"Let me fend for myself till then. I can meet you by arrangement."

Salamis said: "Wait. I have an idea and wish to telephone."

For ten minutes or so Vanbrugh leaned with his head against the wall, half awake and half dozing. It was three o'clock and the lethargy and fatigue had come back to his limbs.

He started up as Salamis came back into the room.

"Do you know the town?"

Vanbrugh stared at him, then shook his head.

Salamis said: "There is an island in the bay. Bourtzi. You have heard of it?"

"No."

"There is a castle on it. Very small. The owner is away and there is nobody there. The caretaker lives near here. I have been to see him. It would be a place to hide."

"You can trust him?"

"Angelos? Ye-es."

The Greek glanced at the cheap clock on the mantelpiece. "It is time to go. The moon has set. You will need food and drink for at least twenty-four hours. I will arrange that with Angelos in the morning. There is danger tonight; first the risk of being seen in the streets now, which are empty; second of being seen going out to the island."

"How far is the island from the shore?"

"Oh, no distance. Six hundred metres."

"I'll swim."

Salamis took a heavy key out of his pocket. "This will let you into the castle. Inside you'll find a bed. Angelos will come in the morning. Now I'll take you as far as the quay."

Madame Salamis got up and went to the door and opened it to put an empty tin out. "There is nobody about."

"Good," said Salamis. "Now come. . . ."

Ten minutes later they were on the deserted quay. Vanbrugh quickly stripped off his suit.

Salamis said: "It is quite safe from here if you can swim well. Do not lose the key. Angelos will bring your suit over to you in the morning. He will also bring you word of arrangements for tomorrow night. Down these steps, now. God go with you."

"And with you," said Vanbrugh.

He found water at the eighth step, slipped slowly into it and began to swim. The water was quite cold but refreshing. There was no risk of missing his mark: boats and the harbour end stood out clearly in the starlight, and right ahead of him a black hump showed up between the jaws of the bay.

A few minutes brought him to the edge of the rocks. He had no difficulty

PRAISE—I

I hardly know any duty more important than that of not praising where praise is not due.

Sydney Smith

in finding the landing quay, which was just a concrete step running out into the sea. Twenty yards across a flat sanded surface took him to the door of the keep.

He had little enough energy to look round the place. There was a courtyard and various other doors, one of which he found unlocked. It led into kitchens and then downstairs into queer cell-like rooms with the sound of water lapping close under the windows. In one of the rooms was a bed. He stripped and lay down on it. In a few minutes he was asleep. . . .

He woke to the sound of someone whistling. It wasn't a jolly tune, but three or four notes repeated over and over again in a monotonous and depressing way. He got up and pulled on the clothes he had, which had lost some of their wetness in five hours.

A man was coming down the steps carrying a bag. He was short, square-shouldered, red-haired and walked with a limp. When he got to the bottom step he put his bag down and said: "Your health. There's clothes here and food. And Carlos will be here for you tonight."

Vanbrugh said: "I should not have heard you but your whistle woke me. . . ."

"You slept well?"

"Like a log."

"Just so. Just so." Angelos gave him a peculiar smile. "The police are looking for you, *koubari*. They say they found your bag on a train at Argos. That true?"

Vanbrugh nodded as he got into his suit. He was used to summing people up quickly. Young Salamis had been as clear as day. Not so this man. One was in muddy water from the first word and the first glance. He followed the man up the stone steps.

"Someone is coming for me tonight?"

"Tomorrow morning. Carlos will pick you up, and I shall be glad to see the back of you, I can tell you; but he cannot do so till the moon has set, which will be at four. You'll see his boat leaving the harbour at sundown. A handsome boat. I wish I had one like it."

"You do?"

"Yes. It's a blue one, and if there's a breeze it will carry a red sail. In the night it will come back for you. You'd best be ready on the little quay. There'll be no light, but you'll hear the engine."

They walked across the courtyard. As they came to the outer door, Angelos stopped again. He said: "I'll have to have the key, mind. Leave the door unlocked when you go."

Vanbrugh watched Angelos row away across the pale water of the bay. He was no surer of him than after the first word. He had gone off leaving his prisoner where he could get at him any time. There were eighteen hours yet during which Angelos might call at the police station and earn the reward of twenty-five thousand drachmae on his head. A sobering thought.

After he had eaten, he looked over the castle; then he went down again to the room where he had spent the night. It was cool there after the heat upstairs and he felt sleepy again. The bed still bore the impression of where he had lain almost unmoving through the night. He lay down in the same place, and allowed his mind to slip back into thoughts of Anya.

Presently he fell asleep.

He saw his boat leave just as dusk was falling; there was a little wind and the red sail was set. As it went out, its engine chugging, it came quite near the island and he saw two men aboard. They didn't glance at the island. He watched the boat until it was out of sight round the south headland; then he crouched where he was for another half-hour watching the lights winking on all over the town.

Dry-clothed and rested, he went back to the kitchens and ate some supper. He saved some of the wine for later. He had slept so well that there was now no sleep in him; in any case, although there were still seven hours to wait, he could not take the risk of lying down again, this especially so because of the onset of cloud and an increase in wind. If the night grew dark enough, they might come for him before his time.

Or, if the wind grew strong enough, they might not come at all.

By midnight there was no moon and a light drizzle was falling. The wind had veered and freshened but was still nothing more than a strong breeze. The water slapped against the rocks in little spiteful wavelets as if the castle were a ship pushing against the tide. Occasionally he wandered about the place.

Eventually he began a tour of the battlements, crouching whenever the moon shone, moving again at the next cloud. The drizzle had stopped and shadows were lengthening; he looked at his watch. If they were prompt, he had only another seventy minutes to wait.

The moon set slowly, swelling as it neared the mountains. Vanbrugh stirred his cramped limbs and moved to go down. As he did so, somebody

whistled faintly, a flat two notes, cautious, inquiring.

So they were early. He moistened his lips and whistled back.

He padded down the steps to the stone courtyard, opened the great door and stepped through on to the rough gravel approach to the tiny quay. The boat was there and the two men were standing beside it. He walked up to them. As he got near, he saw the vessel had a short, stubby mast. Two other men were crouching in the shadow of the jetty.

So Angelos had earned his new boat.

Vanbrugh turned to run, to jump off the low rocks into the sea, but one of the policemen, nervous in the dark, stood up quickly and shot him in the back. . . .

THE small whitewashed room had tumbled down upon him in irregular intervals of consciousness throughout the first thirty hours. Only in the daylight of the second day did he recognize his identity again and the separateness of movement about him. A woman was with him, an old woman, and sometimes a man with a beard.

At the foot of his bed was a slip of paper that the man sometimes wrote on and then put back, some record of progress or betrayal. The woman washed him and gave him liquid to drink. Once he heard what the bearded man said. It sounded like "he'll do," or "we'll do."

Thereafter, a period of sleep, and it was waking fully conscious and completely aware of his position for the first time that he saw the bars across his window. . . .

After that it was dark for a long time, and the unshaded electric bulb hurt his eyes when someone switched it on. The nurse came in, and with her was the doctor and the policeman, Major Kolono, Lascou's friend.

The doctor said: "I'll give him another transfusion in the morning. It will strengthen him for the journey."

"Can he walk?" said Kolono.

"I suppose he could, well strapped up. It's chiefly weakness now from loss of blood. But the obvious thing is an ambulance, if you intend to take him tomorrow."

"He's got to go tomorrow," said Kolono, fingering his moustache. "We want him for interrogation."

"I shouldn't advise interrogation for a day or two. It might cause a relapse."

"We want him for interrogation," said Kolono. "It makes very little difference to us whether he has a relapse or not."

"That's just as you say," said the doctor, looking annoyed. "But you know it's my duty to point out these things."

He left the room, but Major Kolono went to the window, staring out, with his hands clasped behind his back. The nurse gave Vanbrugh a milk drink in which some drug was rather unsuccessfully disguised. Then she asked him if he could eat anything and he said he could.

When the nurse left the room to get him food, Kolono came and stood by the bed.

"So you are still alive, eh?"

Vanbrugh didn't answer. His strength needed conserving.

"The bullet missed all vital parts," said Kolono. "Pity. It might have saved us the trouble of taking you back for trial."

Vanbrugh said: "I thought—you would enjoy that."

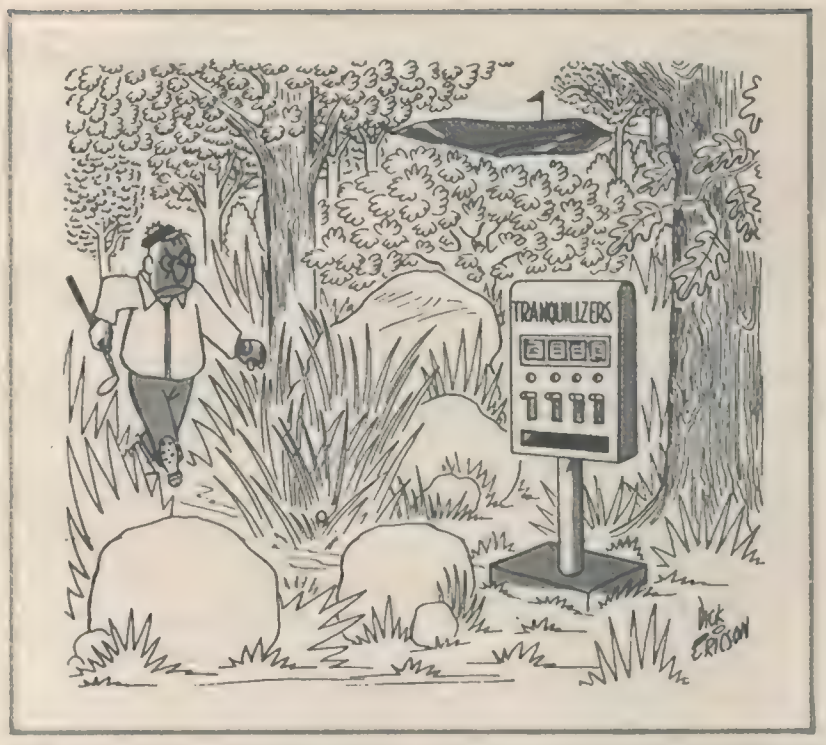
Kolono took out a cigar and fitted it into a short yellow holder. "It is my duty to tell you that the woman calling herself Maria Tolosa has been arrested in Thessaloniki."

"What?" He was too weak even to pretend. "What are you talking about?"

"She was taken on Saturday as she was trying to board a ship. We have been on the look-out for her, you know. She was seen leaving Heracles House on the night of the murder."

There seemed to be grit in Vanbrugh's teeth. He tried to speak but could not.

Kolono said: "Of course it will



make no difference. Whatever her testimony may be, we shall make specially sure of convicting you. Whichever of you actually used the knife on Lascou does not matter. You will be charged jointly. Our taking her won't have helped your case at all. . . ."

Through the day that followed Vanbrugh gained strength, but it was slow. During the afternoon he slept a little and dreamed of Lascou's death and of Anya calling to him from far off.

The doctor came in at four and inspected the two wounds in his side. He prodded them a good deal too much and then injected in the thigh. Another official came in and they talked in low tones in a corner of the room while the nurse re-dressed his side.

Major Kolono came into the room and the conference continued in the corner. Presently the two other men left and Kolono waited until the nurse had done. When she, too, had gone, he stayed by the window for a while, hands behind his back.

Vanbrugh waited. Several minutes passed in complete silence. Kolono turned, his face half lit now, the other half shadowed. He said: "You will leave at seven this evening for Athens. I will drive with you personally. Then there will be no chance of escape."

"I couldn't get far at present." Vanbrugh watched the man's regular false teeth gripping the cigar holder. He badly wanted to smoke. He said: "I don't know if it's any good appealing to your sense of chivalry, Major Kolono."

"What d'you mean?"

"Well, why don't you drop this charge against Maria Tolosa, and let her go? She's not much more than a girl and it's me you want really."

"It is you we want really," Kolono agreed.

"She saw her own husband killed. She was half crazy with grief. She didn't know what she was doing. Why can't you be lenient with her and concentrate on me? I came to Greece to get Lascou and I got him. Isn't that enough for you?"

"That you did it?"

"That I did it."

Kolono's eyes were like dark olives freshly moistened. "I wish I could make use of that."

"Can't you?"

"Unfortunately, no."

The spiral of smoke was going straight up. Kolono did not seem to be drawing on the cigar.

Vanbrugh said: "Put it to your superiors. It would save time, trouble, publicity. On the one hand you'd have two people in the box fighting all the way. On the other you'd have one man with a full confession, trial over in a day, and the Spanish woman shipped off without being allowed to become a nuisance."

Silence fell.

Kolono said: "Unfortunately I may not consider it. I have another proposition altogether to put to you."

"What is that?"

"What would you say if we offered you your freedom . . . ?"

Dressed in the now frayed and stained suit he had bought in Athens, Vanbrugh was helped to the door of the ambulance and got in.

Major Kolono climbed in and sat on the opposite bunk, and the ambulance drove out of the gates of the prison. It was not quite dark yet, but the sun had set.

Vanbrugh said for the fourth time: "What's the catch in all this?"

Kolono lit another cigar. "In a few minutes from now this ambulance will stop with engine trouble. While we are stopped you will leave the ambulance and go."

"D'you like it better that I should be shot again while trying to hobble away?"

"It would give me great pleasure to be able to do that personally."

"And that's the arrangement?"

"I am here to tell you the arrangement. Where we stop will be at an inlet on the coast between—well, no matter—at an inlet. A boat is waiting there to take you to Brindisi. Once you reach Italy it will be your personal concern to return to Paris."

"I don't understand."

"Maria Tolosa has not yet been publicly interrogated. But she was privately interrogated by me this morning. She is prepared, under pressure from us, to swear that the man who was seen leaving Heracles House with her on Tuesday night was her brother-in-law, Philip Tolosa."

"Philip To. . . . But he's. . . ." Vanbrugh stopped.

"He is dead."

There was a pause. Vanbrugh said: "Do you mean you intend. . . ."

"I can promise you nothing absolutely—except your freedom tonight. We are prepared, on conditions, to prove that Philip Tolosa, not you, killed Lascou. You will be free."

AFTER a time Vanbrugh said: "I don't begin to understand why you're proposing it. Who is behind this?"

"There are two conditions. One is absolute secrecy. You return to Paris and keep your mouth shut. No reporters. No interviews. No idle talk with friends. In no circumstances do you say anything about your visit to Greece."

"And the second?"

"The second is that in no circumstances do you ever return here."

"That's more difficult."

"Murderers can't be choosers."

"And Maria Tolosa?"

"That is for the law to decide. If this proposition is carried through, she will appear rather as a witness than as a collaborator. She might get off; at worst, she might go to prison for a few months. Again I cannot promise anything."

"And if I refuse to go? If I decide this is all some sort of a cheat and prefer to stand my trial with her?"

"It will be very much worse for Maria Tolosa if you stay, since the need for us to use her mainly as a witness will have disappeared."

The ambulance lurched and rattled over the rough road.

"Why am I so dangerous to keep?"

"You will see now," said Kolono, stubbing out his cigar and putting away the end in his case.

The ambulance came to a stop. The driver got down and opened the doors. It was clear that he was a party to the arrangement. Vanbrugh pushed himself into a sitting position and allowed himself to be helped out. Kolono followed.

The moon was full. They had stopped in a side road. A low wall bordered it, with pine trees on one side and on the other the sea. Low, jagged rocks hemmed in the narrow mouth of the bay.

In the lane a few yards ahead of them a car was parked. Two people were standing beside it. Vanbrugh recognized them at once as Jon Manos and Anya.

Getting to her, he almost forgot the pain in his side. She did not come to meet him. Kolono followed close behind, and in a minute the four were grouped together.

Nobody seemed to want to be the first to speak. Then Kolono said: "Well, here he is."

Manos said: "Do you agree that our part of the bargain is now fulfilled?"

Anya said: "It will be when he reaches Paris."

"Anya," Vanbrugh said.

"Is your—wound bad?"

"No, nothing. Why are you here? What is this arrangement?"

Anya's voice sounded tired and hoarse. The colours and tones of their last two days together had quite gone from it.

She said: "I want five minutes with him alone."

"*No!*" said Kolono. "Anything you say must be said in front of us."

After a minute Anya said: "I have made a bargain with these gentlemen, Peter. For a certain consideration they are prepared to see you out of the country. That is all. It is as simple as that."

"I don't understand you," Vanbrugh said.

"You did not finish reading the letters from George Lascou to Anton Avra?"

"No. I thought you'd burned them."

"In the haste that first evening I put them between the music inside the piano. In the last two letters there were other names mentioned besides his own. Six names in all. Two are here with us tonight. . . ."

"And?"

"I realized the letters were still not quite useless. I took them to the Bank of Greece. They are now in its vaults with instructions that in the event of my death—or yours—they are to be delivered personally to the editor of *Aegis*."

Vanbrugh leaned against the wall. In his weakness the importance of what Anya had said kept escaping him.

"Anya——"

"Come, we've wasted long enough," said Manos coldly. "The boat is waiting."

Vanbrugh did not move. He said: "And what happens to the letters when I reach Paris?"

"They stay where they are," said Anya.

"And you?"

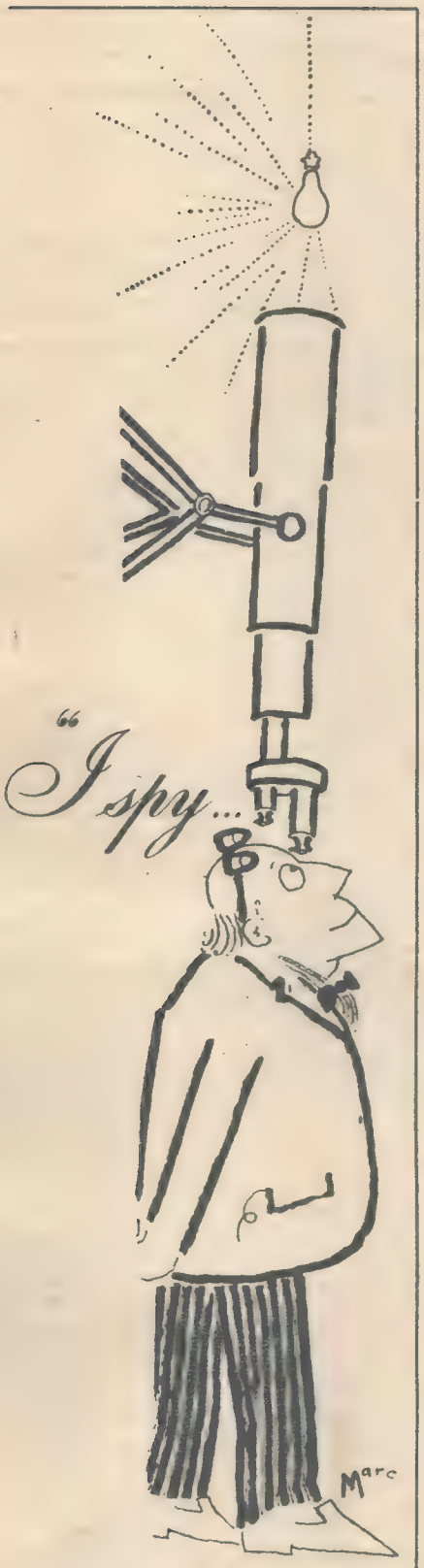
"I, too, stay where I am."

"So that's it. Then I'm not going."

Manos turned on him. "Listen, man; you're lucky to have had this woman to fight for you. We fought it out, round a table for five hours, while you were lying in your bed in Nafplion. You were not consulted in this and you are not being consulted now."

"That's what you may think——" Vanbrugh stopped because Anya was pulling at his arm.

Manos said: "For a certain consideration we are prepared to make it



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"And d'you think I'm willing to get out on those terms?"

"You've no choice. The bargain has been struck. Now get out and never come back."

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"But it's impossible——"

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Heaven's Image

by KATHRINE SORLEY WALKER

The room is lamp-lit, fire-lit, curtain drawn fortressed against
the night, against the world,
the wine is poured, the
cigarettes burn down. . . .
Here's the illusion in an atom-age
of life untroubled, civilized, at
peace, tenderly perfect as the
orchid spray that curves in
beauty from its crystal sheath.
Is it illusion? Or are war and
grief?
And this but heaven's image early
met,
Always to cherish, never to forget.

Fighting for the motorist's money

Continued from page 24

he had spent £800 on new prints and a revised commentary. To beat the ban, he hired a mobile cinema and sent it to Brighton where it screened the film to thousands of holidaymakers.

Last August Bank Holiday Monday Rogers sent up a photographer in a hired aeroplane to take photographs of traffic jams on roads to the south coast. The next day he thumbed through scores of prints, but they seemed to prove the opposite of what he had expected. Not one showed a really big traffic hold-up. The idea of the flight had been suggested by the council's chairman, Wilfrid Andrews, who is also chairman of the Royal Automobile Club. Mystified, Rogers rang Andrews and reported his failure. It transpired that many motorists, tired of traffic-packed roads, had boycotted them and stayed at home. "For months previously I had been warning in my speeches that this would happen," says Rogers. "My prophecy came true on the one day that I didn't want it to."

Early this year fifty M.P.s formed an all-party roads study group for which the Roads Campaign Council does secretarial work. One of Rogers's jobs was to arrange a tour of French and Belgian roads for twenty-four M.P.s, twelve from each of the two major parties. He booked seats on an airliner, but a few days before the flight he was asked to see Edward Heath, the Government Chief Whip. "Suppose that airliner crashed with fatal results," said Heath. "There would be twenty-four by-elections. And some of them are marginal seats."

Eventually Rogers got berths for ten of the M.P.s and told Heath that the rest would still have to fly. Heath agreed that the risk had been reduced as much as possible. Rogers added: "Don't forget I'm going to be in that airliner myself."

In and around Brussels the M.P.s saw two thousand men working on new roads and seven "fly-unders" and a viaduct which will cost a total of £7,500,000. Modern motorways like these, says Rogers, will reduce the number of accidents and speed traffic.

In Britain he took a close interest in the Hertfordshire village of Markyate, on the A5, where there had been so many accidents that parents would not let their children go into the main street by themselves. When the Ministry of Transport announced that building the Markyate by-pass would take six months longer than was at first expected, Rogers visited the site. "I saw only one man and one youth at work," he says, "a point which I did not fail to mention in my speeches."

Normally he is provided with statistics by experts of the British Road Federation, but on one occasion he did his own research to show how industry's costs are increased by inadequate roads. Driving from Birmingham to Bristol, he checked on his mileometer how much of the route was restricted to thirty miles an hour. The next day in a speech at Bath he was able to point out that twenty-two of the eighty-eight miles were restricted and that it took a heavy lorry five and a half hours to make the journey. "I had to drive behind one," he says.

Forty-three years old, Rogers has been a driver for twenty years. As an army captain during the war he drove thousands of miles on rough tracks and, in the Western Desert, without roads at all. At that time his wife Pamela was driving for the American and French Embassies in London. "We have both done enough driving to feel that we are entitled to talk about our roads," he says.

His campaign budget for 1957 has included £7,000 to run an exhibition caravan, which cost £5,000 to equip, £10,000 for films and £5,000 for publications. He believes that there have been hopeful signs that it is money well spent.

Government spending on roads increased from £8 million in 1955-6 to £16 million in 1956-7. About £30 million will be spent in 1957-8. However, the council is far from satisfied. One county highway engineer told Rogers that under the old programme the roads which he felt his county needed today would take 150 years to build. Under the new £240 million programme they would still take seventy-five years.

In April this year the National and Local Government Officers Association published the result of a survey in which 180,000 householders were asked whether they were satisfied with various public services. The highest degree of dissatisfaction—forty-three per cent—was recorded against roads. "Yet roads would have been well down the list a few years ago," says Rogers.

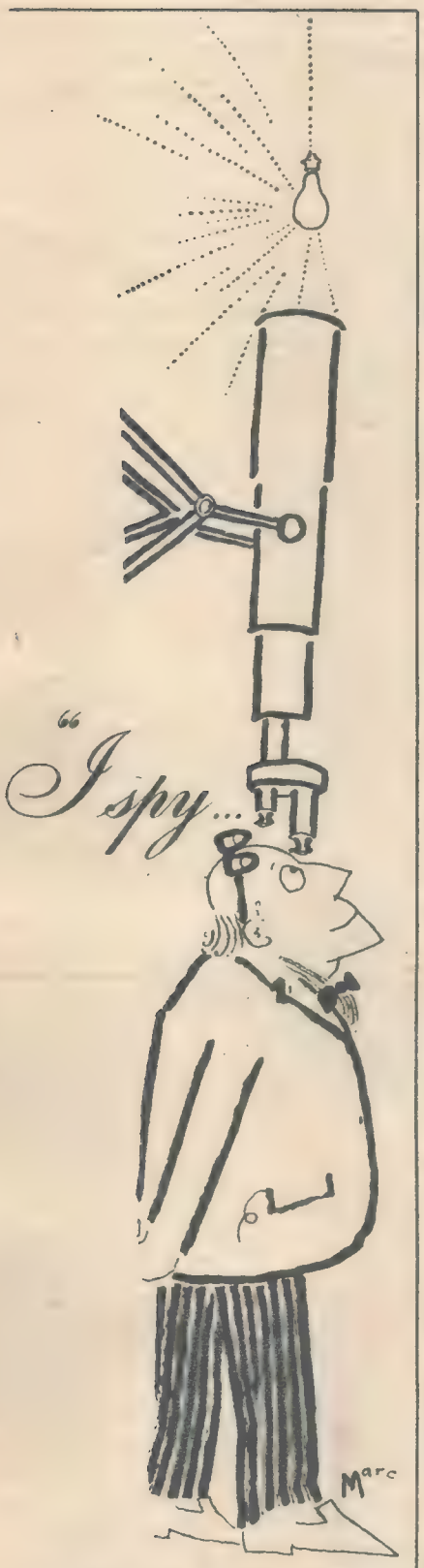
His office mail also reflects growing public interest. Two years ago he got a dozen letters a week. Now he gets more than a hundred. Many are from irate drivers who describe the difficulties they encounter on the roads. Others, including one from Moscow, ask for information about the campaign. Some offer ideas. A Manchester man suggested that as a national protest all drivers should stop their engines wherever they happened to be at noon every Friday and remain stationary for five minutes. Rogers decided that the suggestion might arouse more ill will than support.

He will travel anywhere in the hope of gaining supporters. Eighteen months ago he got a letter signed, "The Secretary, the Motor Club, Maidstone Gaol." It asked him to give a talk to the prisoners. For two hours he held a question-and-answer session, and one man said that prisoners would be better employed building roads.

After making a speech about roads at an Institute of Transport meeting in Leeds, Rogers found a policeman waiting by his car. The policeman said that the car was causing an obstruction and added: "Some people never seem to realize how bad our roads are."

Rogers apologized, then mentioned why he was visiting Leeds. "We had a long and friendly chat about the roads problem," he says, "and finally the policeman let me off with a caution."

THE END



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The room is lamp-lit, fire-lit, curtain drawn fortressed against
the night, against the world,
the wine is poured, the cigarettes burn down. . . .
Here's the illusion in an atom-age
of life untroubled, civilized, at peace, tenderly perfect as the
orchid spray that curves in
beauty from its crystal sheath.
Is it illusion? Or are war and grief?
And this but heaven's image early met,
Always to cherish, never to forget.

Fighting for the motorist's money

Continued from page 24

he had spent £800 on new prints and a revised commentary. To beat the ban, he hired a mobile cinema and sent it to Brighton where it screened the film to thousands of holidaymakers.

Last August Bank Holiday Monday Rogers sent up a photographer in a hired aeroplane to take photographs of traffic jams on roads to the south coast. The next day he thumbed through scores of prints, but they seemed to prove the opposite of what he had expected. Not one showed a really big traffic hold-up. The idea of the flight had been suggested by the council's chairman, Wilfrid Andrews, who is also chairman of the Royal Automobile Club. Mystified, Rogers rang Andrews and reported his failure. It transpired that many motorists, tired of traffic-packed roads, had boycotted them and stayed at home. "For months previously I had been warning in my speeches that this would happen," says Rogers. "My prophecy came true on the one day that I didn't want it to."

Early this year fifty M.P.s formed an all-party roads study group for which the Roads Campaign Council does secretarial work. One of Rogers's jobs was to arrange a tour of French and Belgian roads for twenty-four M.P.s, twelve from each of the two major parties. He booked seats on an airliner, but a few days before the flight he was asked to see Edward Heath, the Government Chief Whip. "Suppose that airliner crashed with fatal results," said Heath. "There would be twenty-four by-elections. And some of them are marginal seats."

Eventually Rogers got berths for ten of the M.P.s and told Heath that the rest would still have to fly. Heath agreed that the risk had been reduced as much as possible. Rogers added: "Don't forget I'm going to be in that airliner myself."

In and around Brussels the M.P.s saw two thousand men working on new roads and seven "fly-unders" and a viaduct which will cost a total of £7,500,000. Modern motorways like these, says Rogers, will reduce the number of accidents and speed traffic.

In Britain he took a close interest in the Hertfordshire village of Markyate, on the A5, where there had been so many accidents that parents would not let their children go into the main street by themselves. When the Ministry of Transport announced that building the Markyate by-pass would take six months longer than was at first expected, Rogers visited the site. "I saw only one man and one youth at work," he says, "a point which I did not fail to mention in my speeches."

Normally he is provided with statistics by experts of the British Road Federation, but on one occasion he did his own research to show how industry's costs are increased by inadequate roads. Driving from Birmingham to Bristol, he checked on his mileometer how much of the route was restricted to thirty miles an hour. The next day in a speech at Bath he was able to point out that twenty-two of the eighty-eight miles were restricted and that it took a heavy lorry five and a half hours to make the journey. "I had to drive behind one," he says.

Forty-three years old, Rogers has been a driver for twenty years. As an army captain during the war he drove thousands of miles on rough tracks and, in the Western Desert, without roads at all. At that time his wife Pamela was driving for the American and French Embassies in London. "We have both done enough driving to feel that we are entitled to talk about our roads," he says.

His campaign budget for 1957 has included £7,000 to run an exhibition caravan, which cost £5,000 to equip, £10,000 for films and £5,000 for publications. He believes that there have been hopeful signs that it is money well spent.

Government spending on roads increased from £8 million in 1955-6 to £16 million in 1956-7. About £30 million will be spent in 1957-8. However, the council is far from satisfied. One county highway engineer told Rogers that under the old programme the roads which he felt his county needed today would take 150 years to build. Under the new £240 million programme they would still take seventy-five years.

In April this year the National and Local Government Officers Association published the result of a survey in which 180,000 householders were asked whether they were satisfied with various public services. The highest degree of dissatisfaction—forty-three per cent—was recorded against roads. "Yet roads would have been well down the list a few years ago," says Rogers.

His office mail also reflects growing public interest. Two years ago he got a dozen letters a week. Now he gets more than a hundred. Many are from irate drivers who describe the difficulties they encounter on the roads. Others, including one from Moscow, ask for information about the campaign. Some offer ideas. A Manchester man suggested that as a national protest all drivers should stop their engines wherever they happened to be at noon every Friday and remain stationary for five minutes. Rogers decided that the suggestion might arouse more ill will than support.

He will travel anywhere in the hope of gaining supporters. Eighteen months ago he got a letter signed, "The Secretary, the Motor Club, Maidstone Gaol." It asked him to give a talk to the prisoners. For two hours he held a question-and-answer session, and one man said that prisoners would be better employed building roads.

After making a speech about roads at an Institute of Transport meeting in Leeds, Rogers found a policeman waiting by his car. The policeman said that the car was causing an obstruction and added: "Some people never seem to realize how bad our roads are."

Rogers apologized, then mentioned why he was visiting Leeds. "We had a long and friendly chat about the roads problem," he says, "and finally the policeman let me off with a caution."

THE END

The wide boys who had the North on a string

Continued from page 21

garage in the suburb of Heaton came over with two cars: a black and stately Wolseley for Mr. Whelby; a dashing little Volkswagen for Mr. Lewis. The firm's business stationery was printed by the ream.

A typist-secretary—not yet Miss Boult—was advertised for and engaged. Mrs. Clarke's boarding house, although everything that could be desired in its class, was not quite in keeping with the life the partners meant to lead. Through application to a firm of estate agents, therefore, two flats were found in fashionable Osborne Road, a discreet avenue near the Town Moor. Once more the payment—£17 monthly each—was handed over for eight weeks in advance. Last, but not least for Mr. Lewis, at any rate, inquiries were made into the whereabouts of such places of entertainment and dalliance as this sooty, dignified city could offer.

On November 28 the partners were ready to begin business as Onalbourne, Limited, Merchants, Manufacturers and Mail Order; dealing, as their tastefully printed notepaper announced, in "Cotton and Rayon—Piece Goods—Ladies' and Children's Wear—Household Textiles and Novelties."

Exactly, and only, twenty days had gone by since that wet night when Stafford and Hawkes slithered down the outer wall of Wormwood Scrubs prison, 275 miles away.

It is to be noticed that the only important transactions settled for in cash were those involving the offices in Pink Lane, the boarding house, and the flats. All other goods and services were strictly—and here quite literally—on the never-never basis.

The month of December was spent in getting to know the local ropes; a preliminary plan of attack, as it were, before the "killing." Mr. Lewis, an ample supply of the firm's cards in his brief-case and his head swimming with technical terms, set off to charm the wholesalers at Manchester, Wigan, Coventry, Leeds and points south.

In no time at all the office in Pink Lane was cluttered with "swatches" and "feelers" and lengths of cloth, either "creased and rolled" or "warehouse wrapped."

This was proof that the old-established mills of Manchester and elsewhere in the cloth latitudes were impressed by this go-ahead young man who knew just what he wanted, and was so disarmingly honest. "We're just starting up," he would tell them with his candid smile, "and we're new in the district. My partner and I are set on getting a good start."

It was so young and hopeful; it was even affecting. But old-established firms, textile or otherwise, are not in commerce for fun. Representatives came up from Manchester and Wigan and Coventry to have a look at Onalbourne, Ltd. They saw the offices in Pink Lane; the "swatches" hung like trophies on the walls; the busy secretary; the steel filing cabinet; the impressive Mr. Whelby. They saw the two cars and Mr. Lewis's camelhair coat—and they went away reassured. There was also, of course, the bank reference. This technique was employed, with variations, on some fifteen well-known firms, and in each case the green light was given. Onalbourne's was safe; Onalbourne's would pay.

There was never, naturally, any intention of paying. The fraud depended on an astute manipulation of the credit allowed by the mills to the intermediary, or middle-men firms.

Onalbourne's asked for a month's credit. They further requested the favour of having their invoices post dated to February 20. The significance of this rested in the fact that debts contracted on or after this date did not need to be met until April 10.

Business started briskly in Pink Lane in early January. So briskly that the partners felt that the time had come to engage an agent. They inserted an attractive small ad in the *Evening Chronicle* of January 14, and

A FUTURE IN COAL TODAY?

Yes, and for 100 years to come

JOB: Colliery Manager
QUALIFICATIONS: First Class Certificate of Competency granted by the Ministry of Power
SERVICE: 9 years
SALARY RANGE: £1,400—£2,100
AGE: 32
PROSPECTS: Excellent
These few facts about one typical young man in today's coal industry tell their own story. He is a good mining engineer and an intelligent and ambitious man. He is typical of hundreds. He is rising fast in a big, vitally important, infinitely varied industry, which offers him and his like an outstanding future.

For the next hundred years at least, Britain's new coal industry must bear the brunt of the most formidable economic challenge in our island's history. If Britain is to flourish in the world's markets, her industries must be able to call on more and more power from coal.

Here is a gigantic but exhilarating challenge to ambitious men in Britain's new coal industry. Already these men are undertaking vast new schemes of reconstruction and expansion. Because of them, mining technology continues to take tremendous strides. Because of them, long-term programmes of mechanisation are being skilfully implemented. Because of them, the newest resources of science and engineering are being put to the winning of coal.

The coal industry is fortunate in having such men. But it still needs more of them. And it needs them now . . .

The material future of Britain depends so much on coal . . . and on the success of the nation's new coal industry. As Britain's need for coal increases every year, so does the need for men ambitious to be mining engineers, electrical and mechanical engineers, and research scientists.

And the rewards measure up to the job. Good money. Excellent prospects. A fascinating variety of problems. And the knowledge that this is one of the most important jobs in Britain.

University Scholarships More highly-trained mining and other engineers will be needed. The National Coal Board offers up to a hundred University Scholarships a year: most are for Mining Engineering, but some are given in Mechanical, Electrical and Chemical Engineering and Fuel Technology.

Practical Training The Coal Board runs two- or three-year courses of Management Training for those who have qualified—either through university or through part-time study at a technical college. Each trainee has a course mapped out for him personally and a senior engineer gives him individual supervision. On the mining engineering side there is a good chance of becoming, between the ages of 26 and 30, a colliery manager with a salary in the range of £1,400 to £2,100.

Other Technical Careers There are also good prospects in Mining Surveying, Civil Engineering and in the Carbonisation Department.

Scientists Graduate scientists in physics and chemistry are needed for urgent and important research and for scientific control work.

Other Careers Young men and women of high educational standard are needed, too, in such fields as marketing, purchasing, finance, staff and industrial relations.

Write today for information to THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF STAFF, NATIONAL COAL BOARD, HOBART HOUSE, LONDON, S.W.1.

Issued by the National Coal Board, Hobart House, London, S.W.1. Divisional Headquarters in: Edinburgh, Newcastle upon Tyne, Sheffield, Manchester, Nottingham, Dudley, Cardiff, Dover

CHIVERS

Jelly ...tastes of more strawberries

Make your party gay with a choice of

Chivers 9 delicious flavours . . . . .

strawberry, raspberry, orange, lemon, lime,

blackcurrant, greengage, pineapple,

fruit cocktail at 9½d. each.

contains REAL fruit juice

Vita-Weat REG'D.

keeps you slim

A PEEK FREAN PRODUCT

the next day Mr. Hutton, interested by the generous terms offered, presented himself as a candidate. Two days later he was hawking round Newcastle Onalbourne's highly competitive "lines."

How competitive they were he soon found out. The very first morning, selling pleated hair cord at 6d. *less* than its wholesale price, he took without difficulty orders worth £650. The killing, in fact, had begun.

It was great fun while it lasted; even weird, in Mr. Hutton's phrase. He had never before seen business done like this. The partners entered the office just before noon, having downed a stiffener at the Court cocktail bar round the corner. Mr. Whelby, sometimes remembering to put on his spectacles, sometimes not, went through the mail (always opened by him) and filed the invoices (never shown to Mr. Hutton).

Young Mr. Lewis, spruce and wisecracking, inspected the morning's delivery of cloth and marked the "lines" for the agent to sell. The day's orders to the latest mill (no mill was ever solicited twice) enrolled in the cause were dictated to Miss Boult; and such money as had come in was sent off to the bank. And presto! the day's work was done.

But the day's pleasure had begun. Newcastle is not exactly Las Vegas, yet there are several places where decent hilarity can be offered to the not too tired young business man. The Eldon in Grey Street, the Pineapple in Nun Street, the bars of the Crown and the rococo halls of the Oxford (dancing to George Evans and his orchestra)—all these got to know the directors of Onalbourne very well. So did several young ladies; some of them typists and secretaries, others models for mass-producing fashion houses.

Politeness demanded that the agent sometimes joined his directors in a little relaxation. In this way, during the three weeks he worked for the firm, he came to know them fairly well, both as business men and private individuals. It was an interesting experience.

Nothing is more chastening, and

PRAISE—2

The praise that comes of love does not make us vain, but humble.

J. M. Barrie

nothing less useful, than to review certain trivial incidents and impressions which, with hindsight, we recognize might have told us that the circumstances of a given situation were not in fact what they appeared to be. In Mr. Hutton's relations with Onalbourne Limited there was nothing which could have put the most suspicious of honest salesmen on his guard.

Yet he freely if wryly admits that there were anomalies which might, with luck, have warned someone of supernatural prescience that he was dealing with a fraud. There was, for example, the baffling, quite incomprehensible language in which the partners sometimes addressed each other. There was the incident of the spring-loaded jack-knife and that of Mr. Whelby's black eye. None of these things, taken in isolation, had the smallest significance. Added together after the event they set off that irritating and traitorous recording machine which we all carry with us and which says, played back: "Well, of course! Why didn't all that make sense at the time?"

The spring-loaded jack-knife was somewhat alarming. Mr. Whelby produced this horrible looking thing, with a facile jerk of his wrist, one morning in the office when the scissors had been mislaid, to cut a "swatch" from a length of cretonne, upon which the agent remarked playfully that such things were forbidden by law—in Newcastle anyway.

"Hear that, Paul?" said Mr. Whelby, holding it up. "They do you for these in this town."

"Blimey, *no*!" cried Mr. Lewis in mock astonishment, and both collapsed into meaningless laughter. It was all very puzzling.

Even more so was the gibberish the two men conversed in on occasions. "*Deen rehtona ytfif rekcin*"—such phrases as this were Cherokee to Mr. Hutton. It means "Need another fifty nicker," and somewhere tucked away in the back of his mind was the knowledge that prisoners made a secret of language by the process of reversing the spelling of words. But this, like so much else, only emerged afterwards.

As for Mr. Whelby's shiner, which he freely admitted was given him by his partner (perhaps for talking too much when he was drunk), Mr. Hutton put that down to the virile overbrimming high spirits of two young colonials. For Messrs. Lewis and Whelby were Rhodesians, so they told Mr. Hutton and anybody else who cared to listen.

One whom Rhodesia did impress was nineteen-year-old Sandra, whose hand Mr. Lewis, after a lightning courtship, asked in marriage. Sandra was a model in one of those "make up" fashion houses of Newcastle.

Many of these are near Bigg Market, and Bigg Market had a peculiar attraction for Mr. Lewis. It is a loud, windy rectangle of cobbles which slopes down behind Pink Lane to the railway station. With its pavement stalls and hawkers, its pubs and pin tables, it creates something of the brassy squalor of Rupert Street, Soho, or Petticoat Lane. All in all, Bigg Market must have given Mr. Lewis, who comes from Golders Green, a most nostalgic pang. It seemed like an acre of London, a bit of the "smoke."

If the Market was London to Mr. Lewis, Mr. Lewis must have seemed very like heaven to Sandra. Rhodesia! And the evening light on the gum trees, the far horizons of their property, and she and Paul riding back through the tangy twilight to the luxurious ranch where a uniformed "boy" poured something cool into a long glass. When Paul proposed, Sandra accepted. Perhaps it was simply lack of time, but he never gave her a ring.

Because time, in the first week of February, was getting short. A few of the Manchester mills which had first supplied Onalbourne's with cloth in December were asking for their money. Tiresome demand notes were coming in; there was talk of solicitors' letters. Outwardly things were much as before. There were still merry parties in the flats at Osborne Road. Mr. Lewis still made his trips to Wigan and Coventry, and even to London. He still took the girls to the Pineapple and the Crown, wisecracking, laughing, charming, followed by solemn Mr. Whelby.

But back in the office, Mr. Hutton became aware of a rising temperature. More and more letters went out to the mills; more and more "swatches" festooned the walls; the rolls of cloth arriving made the office uncomfortably constricted. The "killing" was at its height and Mr. Hutton, at the end of the conveyor belt, unloaded his cloth at lower and lower prices. A hundred dozen pillow slips, a thousand yards of cord, rayon by the furlong, avenues of cretonne—all had to go; faster, cheaper.

MONEY poured in but now, at last, some had to go out. With death in their souls, the partners signed on February 7 a cheque for £215 to stave off the unpleasant and threatening demands of a Manchester mill. And as if this—the first and only cheque ever paid out for cloth received—were the evil intrusion that broke a beautiful spell, things began to go wrong immediately. Suddenly, as the bewildered Mr. Hutton puts it, everybody set about "doing" everyone else.

Someone, recognizing Dennis Stafford, "did" Mr. Lewis. But someone also, for wide boys have their friends, "did" the police. It was all unsuspecting that Mr. Lewis took a quiet drink in the bar of the Station Hotel on the evening of Friday, February 8. He left in a hurry. When, ten minutes later, detectives burst into the bar, brandishing his photograph, he was back in the flat at Osborne Road, feverishly packing his nylon shirts and

"I know you've had a hard day at the office and are glad to get home. Well, I've had a hard day at home and will be glad to get out"

flowered bathrobe. A trip to Manchester was already arranged.

Events henceforward assume the complexity of an early Shakespearean comedy. Mr. Whelby was in touch with his partner during the weekend, who told him of the "doing" and ordered him to collect as much money as possible and clear out. Hence Mr. Whelby's nervous state on Monday morning, the 11th, which had so surprised Mr. Hutton. Hence, also, the instructions to Mr. Hutton from Mr. Lewis in Manchester to stop the cheque for £215 so that Mr. Whelby could forge a cash cheque for this amount, which he did on the afternoon of Monday. The story of Mr. Whelby's perfidy had been told Mr. Hutton to inject in him a sense of urgency, and to prevent him knowing the truth too soon. In this it succeeded. All the agent's considerable energy on Tuesday the 12th was expended on behalf of a firm which didn't exist.

It might appear odd that the absconding pair had been given so much grace since Mr. Lewis was "done" on Friday evening. But the police only knew that the men had been reported in Newcastle and what they looked like; they had no idea of the identity they had assumed. It was not till the early hours of Wednesday, when Mr. Hutton was disturbed from his sleep, that the trail—and Onalbourne's time—came to an end.

Mr. Hutton, however, had a last commission to discharge for the firm. On the morning of Friday the 15th, while the police were carting away the rolls of cloth and the office furniture, and the bills from garages, newsagents, laundries, wine merchants and printers were falling like leaves in Pink Lane, the telephone rang with a call from Manchester. A big textile mill was on the line.

"We have here," said the voice, "a heavy consignment of rayon for Onalbourne's. When do you want it?"

"Never," said Mr. Hutton gleefully. "You can put it right back in the warehouse. Onalbourne's have done a moonlight flit." He replaced the receiver without further explanation. It was pleasant to be surprising someone for a change.

Down in London, ten days later, Mr. Whelby was being surprised by detectives in the King's Hotel, off Bayswater Road. He had been there a week. Mr. Whelby had arrived at the hotel in company with Mr. Lewis, but Mr. Lewis was living elsewhere.

Mr. Whelby was once again Anthony Hawkes; but Mr. Lewis was not yet Dennis Stafford—or Siegenberg, to give him his real name. He had become Mr. Walter Henry Birch, and he had an official document to prove it, for his eyes were fixed on far horizons. While Anthony was drooping in Bayswater Road, waiting to be "done," Dennis was entertaining the girls in the West End night clubs, and going through the formalities of getting a passport. And three days after Anthony was back in a cell once more, Mr. Birch was steaming out of Southampton on the liner Antilles, bound for Trinidad and the sun.

How on earth, people ask wonderingly, can a wanted man, a jailbird on the run, get a passport? The truth is that it is as easy to get one as it is to buy a railway ticket. Anyone can get anybody a passport, provided always that he is prepared to make several false statements and forge a signature —considerations which weighed lightly with Dennis Stafford. A birth certificate is needed, but the birth certificate of anyone alive or dead can be had for the small fee of 5s. 3d. at Somerset House, in London. All Stafford had to do was to find, in the records, the certificate of a young man, any young man, of about his age, pay his fee to obtain a franked and stamped copy of it, sign his own two photographs and take it to the passport office in Clive House, Westminster. In Clive House, it is true, there is a formidable form to be filled in, but only one of its clauses need detain anyone bent on fraud.

As regards the ticket on the Antilles, that gave him no trouble at all. He had his passport and he had the money, and both were in order.

WALTER BIRCH liked Trinidad, and the people liked him. The same high-powered charm which had blinkered his dupes in Newcastle soon had him playing his favourite part—the dynamic young tycoon who "gets things done." He began negotiations for an interest in a firm dealing with the provision of soft-drink and soda-water machinery. He talked of buying a night club; he gave, as always, the local girls an expensive treat. Unhappily, he had left a girl behind him in London. Her name was Eileen, and on her he had such a potent effect that she vowed to make her life with his.

He told her where he was going—which was something the police didn't know. But the police knew Eileen and knew, too, that she was one of Stafford's girls. Eileen was watched, and when she sent a telegram to Mr. Birch that she was about to set sail to join him, the detectives put two and two together. There was a good chance, they believed, that Walter Henry Birch was Dennis Siegenberg—Stafford—Lewis. He was.

If, during the process of obtaining his passport, Dennis Stafford had perused the helpful little form given to applicants at Clive House, his eye might have caught the paragraph which warns those taking up employment overseas to ensure that the provisions for their repatriation are "fully satisfactory."

As things turned out, that was the one thing that need not have worried him. To be brought home by detectives might not be very satisfactory. But at least you are certain of reaching the old country safe and sound. THE END

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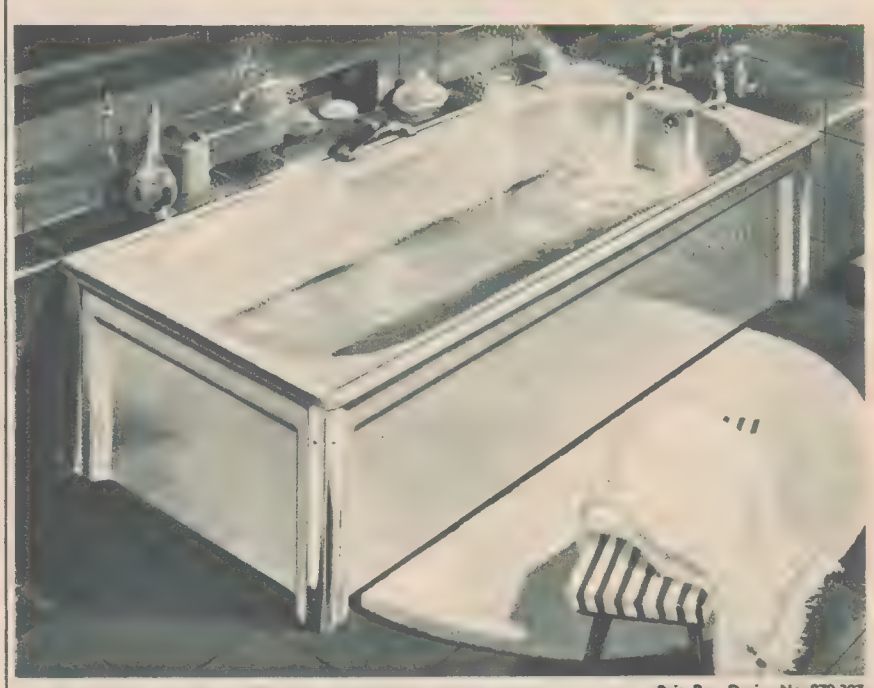

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In shining, easy-to-clean white, it only costs £20.0.0. (The panels, taps and chrome safety handle are extra, because everyone wants something different.) And if you've an eye for colour, choose from the Vogue range of pastel enamels, from £28.0.0.

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Please send me the Vogue Bath leaflet

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AI

A woman of sentiment

Continued from page 23

have the rennicks knocked on the head. It's quite merciful and the correct practice, as every pigman knows.

Somehow Mrs. Jessop found out about this and, of course, she kicked up an awful row. The trouble is that little pigs look rather fetching—they always appeal to women, I notice—and the rennick is a pathetic little squirt.

So the *fiat* was issued—all rennicks to be kept. No murder. I wish Mrs. Jessop could have heard the pigman's language when I told him. Even an old sow looked startled when he let fly.

We had nowhere to put them when they were weaned. We needed a new piggery badly, but Mrs. Jessop said she couldn't afford one, though she could afford a winter trip to Cannes. So every nook and cranny was full of pigs, and the rennicks were homeless.

"I'll put it to you straight, Mrs. Jessop," I said. "I've got no room for these little perishers. If I send them to market now they'll fetch nothing."

"You can't do that," she said. "They need special care, and whoever buys them won't look after them. They're like handicapped children. *I'll* look after them."

"You?" I said. "You know you'll never do that."

"How dare you accuse me of callousness! Of course I shall look after them. There's an empty loose-box next to the garage. They can go there."

I knew what that would mean. Kent, the chauffeur-gardener, would have to look after them—and what *he* wouldn't say! Still, that removed them completely from my jurisdiction.

Then, just as I was going down the drive towards the farm buildings, an old van tottered up and out got a fellow whom I recognized as the rat-catcher. I had rung him up because the place was simply crawling with rats.

IF the ratcatcher had had the sense to drive straight to the farm buildings instead of to the house, the trouble would never have occurred; or even if Mrs. Jessop hadn't come out just at that moment, all tweeded up for some race meeting or other. I saw the danger immediately and tried to shoo the man away. But he started to tell Mrs. Jessop what a hell of a fellow he was for catching rats.

"You won't find a live rodent on the place a week after my visit," he said.

"How do you kill them?" Mrs. Jessop inquired suspiciously.

"Strychnine, mostly," he said.

"But that's a terrible death."

"Well, rats are terrible creatures," he said. "And it does the job."

"They die in agony!" she exclaimed.

"I wouldn't say that," the rat-catcher replied, tumbling too late to the situation.

"You know they do, you wicked man. You're nothing but a murderer."

"So you want your corn all eaten up, do you, ma'am?" said the rat-catcher fiercely.

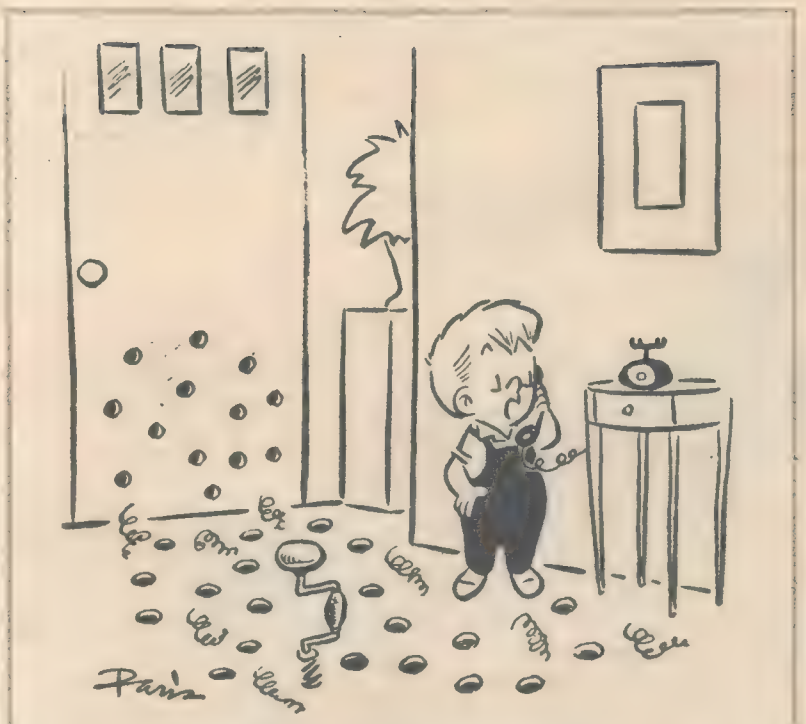
"Corn? What's that got to do with it? Do you mean to tell me"—she turned to me—"that you've engaged this man to spread strychnine all over my farm?"

"But, Mrs. Jessop——" I began.

It was no use. The wretched rat-catcher was just about torn to pieces. He was a wicked, cruel, sadistic man, he made his living out of the agony of helpless animals and she'd telephone for the police if he ever set foot again on her land. The man drove off in a huff, and I don't blame him, saying he'd be so-and-so'd if he'd ever come near the place again.

So that was it. Tons of corn were going through the drier and into the silos mainly for the rats' benefit.

Before I'd got over that, a car drove up and a very angry-looking girl got out of it. I knew who she was—old Tom Saxton's daughter. I'd often seen her around. She drove the tractor as well as a man, milked the cows, dosed the sheep and rode in local point-to-points. In spite of that she managed to look quite feminine and attractive



"Killing time. What are you doing?"

too. She was a tall girl with golden hair and a very nice figure.

"Good morning," I said politely.

"My father's compliments," she said, "and I'm to tell you that if you want to start a bull-breeding establishment, he suggests you go to Spain."

"They broke through your fence, I suppose," I said, my heart in my boots.

"They damned well did break through our fence," said the girl—Molly was her name. "Our barley field looks like it's had a bulldozer through it."

"I'm sorry," I said, and I was, too; sorry and sore. I hadn't a leg to stand on. Every farmer is responsible for keeping his own beasts under control.

Molly was pretty angry. "My father says he doesn't want to make trouble, but Mrs. Jessop will have to pay."

I nodded. She would.

I must have looked pretty browned off, for she added a bit more kindly: "We know it isn't your fault. She made you turn them out, didn't she?"

"Well," I said, not knowing how to react. "You know how it is."

"Hell, I should think," said Molly. "Dad says he wouldn't be in your shoes for ten thousand a year."

I must say I needed a bit of sympathy, and was grateful for it. After

PRAISE—3

People ask you for criticism, but they only want praise.

Somerset Maugham

that Molly and Tom Saxton were both pretty decent, considering how fed up they must have been.

I had to get a cattle-truck to fetch back the bulls. I reckoned that little episode would cost Mrs. Jessop about £300.

"Perhaps it'll teach her a lesson," Molly said.

But I knew that all that would happen was that Mrs. Jessop would fly into a frenzy and probably cancel the order for the new grain drier we so badly needed, or force me to sell some Angus cross-steers immediately, when they weren't finished and the markets were down.

I had just about reached the point of throwing in my hand. In fact, I think I would have done, only when I mentioned it to Molly one day she strongly advised me to hang on.

"There's always a chance Mrs. Jessop may get fed up with it," she said. "She may sell the farm, and the new owner may leave you in charge."

For the next six weeks after that we had the harvest and I never seemed to draw breath at all. At the end of it I told Mrs. Jessop I was going to take a week's holiday.

Mrs. Jessop went away about the same time. She went off to Scotland in the car with Kent. I was glad she was out of the way, and wouldn't get things knotted up in my absence.

I had a good holiday, but I came back to the worst trouble so far.

It was those rennick pigs. Mrs. Jessop had made a lot of fuss of them, and Kent had looked after them and they'd come on well. Rennicks will, if you have the time to give to them.

But then Mrs. Jessop had gone away and taken Kent with her and, would you believe it, she'd made no arrangements whatever for anyone to look after those pigs.

As luck would have it the pigman was also on holiday and the pigs were being fed by the cowman, who knew nothing about the rennicks. The house was shut up and empty. It's about half a mile from the farm buildings, so that nobody down at the farm could hear the pigs, poor devils.

Anyway, the upshot was, they didn't get fed for three or four days. Then someone had driven up to the house—I think an electricity board man—and looked round for an occupant, not realizing that everybody was away. He'd heard noises, and opened the loose-box door. The pigs were wild with thirst and hunger, emaciated, and two were dead.

They must have been a dreadful sight. The electricity man, understandably, was so disgusted and furious that he'd gone straight off and reported the situation to the R.S.P.C.A. An inspector arrived, and then, of course, the fat was in the fire.

The pigs were rescued and had recovered by the time I returned. The inspector had "created," so the cowman reported, and said that Mrs. Jessop would be summoned. And quite right, too.

Molly came over to find out if it was true. All sorts of rumours were going round, she said.

"I suppose they'll bring a case before the local magistrates," I said.

"She won't have a very merry home-coming," Molly said. "The valuer has sent in his estimate for the damage done by your bulls. If she won't pay up, Dad will sue her for it."

We all looked forward eagerly to Mrs. Jessop's return. We felt that things were going to boil up to a climax, and we were right. She got back at the end of the month and everything started to happen.

She got Tom Saxton's bill. She raged and stormed as I'd expected. "This is iniquitous," she raved at me. "It's simply a try-on. Blackmail. It's part of a conspiracy."

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Jessop," I said, "but you'll have to pay."

"I'll die first," she said.

No sooner had we got that over than another summons came. Not the one about the pigs—this was the county springing a surprise on us. Rats. I'd warned her, there are laws now about uncontrolled rats. It had got about and no doubt the rat-catcher had told his story to the authorities.

Mrs. Jessop was summoned for failing to take proper steps to control obnoxious pests on her property, viz., rats. The maximum fine was £50 and I thought she'd get it, or not far off.

By now Mrs. Jessop had decided that, in her absence, a plot or conspiracy had been hatched against her to hound her out of the district. Because she was trying to save the lives of innocent animals, all these cruel monsters had ganged up on her. She was a kind of martyr, being stoned by the heathen. I think by now she really *was* round the bend.

THE end came one morning when she summoned me to her house and confronted me, pale and shaking, with a paper in her hand. It was another summons—the R.S.P.C.A. this time.

Glaring at me she said: "I left these unhappy, tortured pigs in your charge. I rescued them when you would have killed them as babies. You resented that. So you made up your mind to get them in the end.

"You waited your chance. Then I went away. I should never have done so, I should have known. When my back was turned, you starved them. You tried to kill them in this dreadful way and, not content with that, to throw the blame on me, to see that I was branded in the eyes of the world as a murderer. You brute!"

"But, Mrs. Jessop, I was away myself. You left without giving any instructions——"

"That's a lie. I left instructions and you cancelled them. *You* are the torturer of those poor little pigs."

She went on raving like a lunatic. I'd had enough. I handed in my notice.

"I'll stay until you get another manager," I said. "But I'll tell you this to your face. You'll never keep one, not unless you keep your hands off what you don't understand and stop mixing sentiment with farming."

After tea I drove over to tell Molly what I'd done.

"What are you going to do next?" her father asked me.

"Look for a job. And I'll make sure my next boss isn't a rich widow."

Tom Saxton laughed. "Would you like to work for me?"

"For you? But you don't need a bailiff, do you?"

"For one thing, I'm getting old," Tom Saxton said. "For another, something tells me Mrs. Jessop's place will soon be up for sale. It's been neglected and it might go cheap."

I was astounded. "I'll think it over," I said, and thanked him.

I did think it over. That, and quite a lot of other things. It seemed to me that sheep were paying, and that if Molly would take care of the sheep and I did the corn and machinery, and we kept on the cowman in charge of the dairy herd, we'd have a good team.

Tom Saxton was right, of course. Mrs. Jessop got an awful ticking off from the chairman at the quarter sessions and a £50 fine. She took it hard, and put the place on the market right away. Tom made an anonymous offer through an agent, a low offer, but she accepted it to get rid of the place.

Now, I'm afraid, the rennicks get knocked on the head and the rats get poisoned and old Corncrake has gone to market. It's sad, but there it is. Farming and sentiment don't mix.

Molly advises me about the sheep. She's very useful on a tractor, too. We aren't engaged, but you might say that there's an understanding. I daresay, when the roots are lifted and the winter corn is in, we might take a few days' holiday and we can think about the future then. THE END

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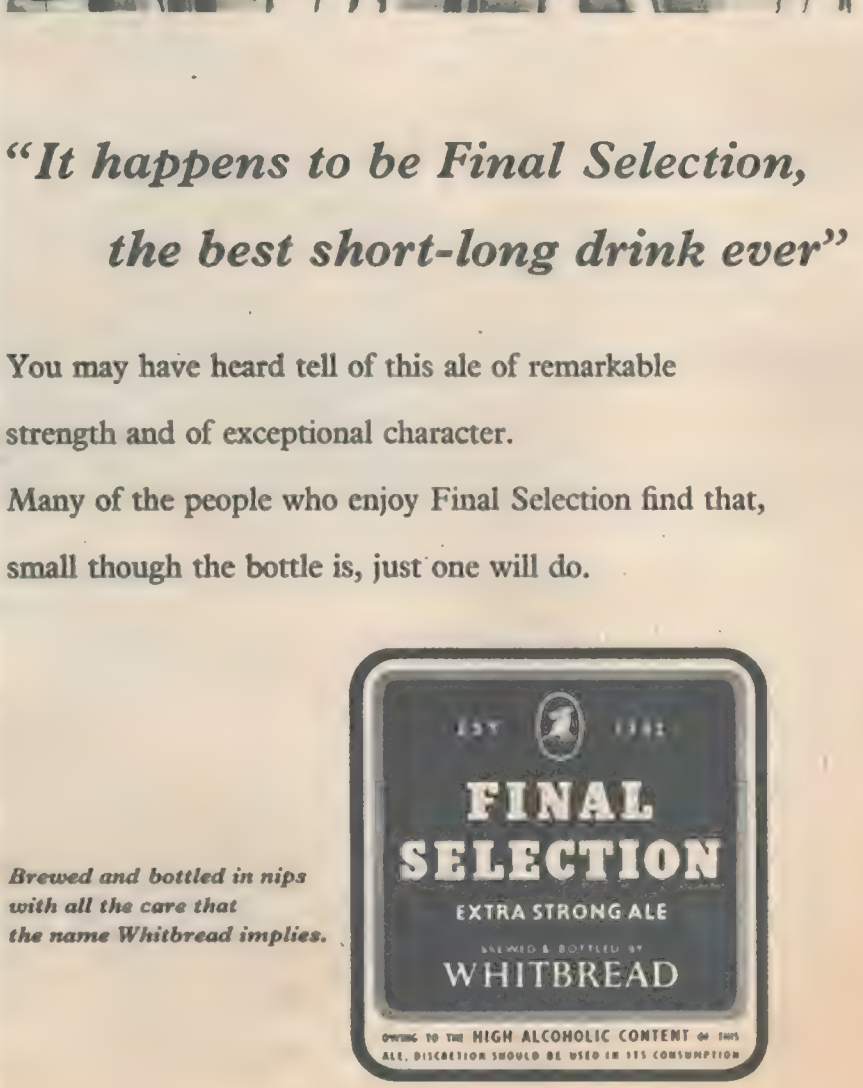
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IT'S NESTLÉ'S—
THE *CREAM* OF MILK CHOCOLATE!

SC64

Storm

Continued from page 11

the lower shelves were already completely awash.

But it wasn't that I was staring at. It was the pulse of water coming between the two plates of the hull. You could have put your hand between them and, as the pressure of each wave came, the water burst through like blood from a cut throat; a great spurting gush, and then a slackening, and then a pulsing gush again. Even while I was looking I thought the wound in the ship opened a hair's breadth wider.

I heard Olaf come in and then the bos'n turned the inside lever that would keep the hatch down while we were working. "It's bad," I said, as they came down and stood beside me in the water.

"Uh huh," said the bos'n. He ran a thumbnail across his cheek. "Cut me a fathom of rope, Spud. It's no use taking a sounding till we've plugged the leak." He might have been a plumber.

I took my sheath knife and hacked him a length off one of the coils. Hard as wet timber.

"Get an end each, boys, and unravel it," the bos'n said. "I'll get the old man on the blower."

And so Olaf and I stood thigh deep in water, one each end of a fathom of four-inch manilla rope, unravelling it strand for strand like two old women spinning thread. But it was Sue that lay between us, half-drowned in the greasy heave of water; Sue's black hair that I held in my numbed hands; my home, my dreams that Olaf was tearing apart between his rasping fingers.

The bos'n was shouting on the blower. "Yes, Cap'n. Three feet in the locker. Two plates sprung. Yes. Yes. Could we go astern?" And from as far away as the moon the small whistling squeak that was the captain answering.

AFTER a while the bos'n plugged the blower again and came back to us, wading heavily through the water that was up to the waist on him. I glanced down. Was it higher on me since we'd started on the rope? It was hard to tell with the ship rolling and sloughing so much.

"Hurry up," said the bos'n. "Old Man says we can't go astern to take the force off the bows. We got to plug her as she is. Couldn't get her round in time."

He hadn't needed to ask really. Nobody could have turned a ship in that water, even if she was answering the helm sharp. I tried to concentrate on unravelling the rope, but it was hard enough even to balance. Only the water kept me from falling. It was up to my waist now and there were things sliding on the deck beneath its surface, wrapping and tapping against my shifting feet as they slid past with the heave of the ship. But not so much of a heave any more. She was lying quieter. Too quiet.

"Sea must be falling," said the bos'n. "There's a crowbar slipping somewhere under my feet. If I can find it we'll ram the yarn into the sprung plates with that."

They were fishscale plates that had parted, fortunately. There's an overlap and you can ram caulking in between the overlapping plates the way you can with timber planks. That's what the three of us were going to do.

"Here she is," said the bos'n, fishing up the crowbar. "Lay them yarns along the leak, Spud."

We lay close against the plates and waited for the gush of water to slacken.

"Now," shouted the bos'n, and I jammed the yarns into the gap, tucking them in with my fingers all the way down the four-foot edge of iron, like making a bed. And chasing my fingers came the bos'n, ram and jam with the end of the crowbar, driving the bundled yarns tight into the split. It was like watching a doctor staunch a wound. The gush

became a slow ooze of water, hardly filming our hands.

"Brace her with timber," the bos'n said. "Olaf, bust two planks off that shelf. We'll put one upright against the seam, jam it with the other against this stanchion. With a bit of luck it'll hold."

With luck. I hadn't ever heard the bos'n say "luck" before, and I looked at him quickly. But there was nothing to see.

I ploughed through the water to where Olaf was slamming at the planks. It was like old times and I wondered why my heart lay so heavy in me. Until I remembered.

"I'll enjoy drowning with you," I said. But he didn't hear me. First there was a noise like a train running across an iron bridge. As if a wave had turned into solid rocks and fallen in an avalanche above our heads. And then from end to end of the ship there was a long, agonized shriek of metal. I think every plate in her had suddenly started.

A jet of water vomited through the leak and hit the bos'n from head to waist, slamming him back against the ladder. Across the locker I heard the shrill squeal of the blower and I saw the bos'n stagger up to it. The water was leaping at my chest and suddenly the light went out and the darkness was like death all around me.

"All hands muster to boat stations," the bos'n shouted.

"Boat stations," I yelled. I could feel the ship settling under my feet, giving up the ghost. Two more waves like that and she'd go straight down to the bottom.

I started back towards the ladder, fighting the darkness and the water. Four steps. Three. Hand out, feeling the darkness for a stanchion, for one of the others. And then something gripping my foot. One of the coils of rope that had broken loose. A loop of it round my foot.

The bos'n shouted: "Don't rush it. I'll open the hatch, and leave it open. Come up quick. Last man shut it and tighten the dogs." There was a grating of iron, and a sudden square of grey half-light with Olaf climbing through. But I couldn't move. The ship gave a sudden lurch and I fell, half-lying, half-floating, my foot caught in a vice.

"Spud," yelled Olaf. "Spud. What in hell are you doing?"

"Nothing," I shouted. "Nothing. Get the hell up on deck, you rat. Go to your bloody Sue." I heard him scrabbling at the hatch cover. "Get out," I yelled. "Get up on deck. I hate your guts."

The hatch cover slammed shut, and this time the darkness was worse than death because I was alone in it, and I would stay in it till Judgment Day. I heard the next wave breaking its huge hatred on the deck and I thought dispassionately, *that must have caught Olaf before he had a chance to get to shelter.*

And then something was splashing in the water beside me, something big and living in the darkness and I screamed like an animal. Then I felt Olaf's hands on me, feeling for what was wrong.

"Get to hell out of here," I said, hating him worse for hearing me scream. "What you come back for? My wallet?"

"Shut up," Olaf said. "Is your foot caught?" He was under water before I could curse him again, and I could feel his hands wrenching at the rope. I pulled sideways, and my foot came free.

"Are you right, there, Spud?"

"Yes," I said. "You were a damn fool to come back." We came shoulder to shoulder by the ladder, and I felt Olaf pushing under my elbow. "Get up and hold the hatch close until the next one has broken. Then we'll both go through," he said.

If the ship stayed afloat long enough. If. Otherwise I'd be struggling to push open that hatch against fifty fathoms of sea. How long before the next one came? Thirty seconds? Thirty years? The iron was cold as wet snow under my hands.

"Is it all right, Spud?" Olaf was saying. "Is it all right now about Sue? Hell, I just thought it would be a funny joke. I didn't think it would be like this."

"Yes," I said. "Of course it's all right. She was just another girl."

"You don't sound as if it was all right," said Olaf.

And then the last sea came. All the dark sky falling. I could sense the ship bursting round me like a vase struck with a hammer.

"Now!" I yelled, driving my weight upwards against the iron hatch. I could feel the weight of water bearing down on it, feel the rung of the ladder slicing into my feet, my shoulders cracking. Up, up. Half an inch. Half a foot. And a white curtain of water pouring over me, dragging at me, forcing me down on top of Olaf. Up, up, till the muscles screamed in my back. And suddenly I was through the hatch.

I FELL on my hands and knees on the deck, and saw we were lifting into the air. She had split in two amidships, and I was looking down a steep hillside of deck. Olaf came up beside me and, as we watched, the after-half of the broken ship slid thirty feet down into the water. In the lift of the wave behind it I could see two lifeboats. The other two were still jammed in the falls.

"There's nothing to stay here for," said Olaf. "I think we should go over."

We went over the rail as the next wave lifted, and dropped ten feet into the water. The ship had slewed broadside on when she broke, and the wave carried us away from her into clear water. There was a raft that had broken free a chain's length away from us and we swam to it, and held the rope handles on its side while we skidded down the fifty-foot slide of the wave.

When we lifted again there was nothing. The ship was gone. And I thought of a shadow caught in the rope locker, a twist of rope holding it by the foot, its mouth open, screaming silently as it drowned.

Olaf heaved himself up on to the raft and pulled me after him. I put a hand on his shoulder. "You monkey," I said. "You woman-stealing monkey. I reckon you'd rob your granny's gas-meter, if she had one."

Olaf grinned, like the sun rising. "I knew you wouldn't mind in the end," he said. "After all, she was just another girl."

"I know," I said. "I know."

"We'll find two women in the next port," said Olaf. "Big women, like Valkyries, with blonde hair and no talk. Dark little talking women are bad for friendship."

And we struck hands on the twisting, sliding, bogsleigh of a raft, and nearly fell off it. A long way ahead we could see one of the lifeboats making towards us and, even at that distance, I could make out the small, bent figure of the bos'n, calm as an old brass monkey in the sternsheets.

Overhead, the wind tore at the clouds, wrenching them apart for a second so that we could see blue sky like the eye of Heaven watching us, and a gull came out of the seawrack, skimming on slender wings like a messenger from land.

The lifeboat came yawing slowly towards us and, when it was ten yards away, we slid off the raft and swam for it, so that the raft wouldn't stove in the boat. Half a dozen hands pulled us inboard and for a long minute we lay on the bottom boards, while somebody shoved the necks of brandy flasks down our throats.

When I sat up the bos'n was staring at the horizon, rasping his thumbnail slowly down and up the stubble of his cheek. "You two aren't still quarrelling?" he said. "Good. Then both of you can grab one oar and get warm. We've got a long way to go."

THE END

PRAISE—4

Modesty is the only sure bait when you angle for praise.

Lord Chesterfield

The office of secret war

Continued from page 13

to it and walked boldly up to the front door. On it was a small brass plate: D. LEVY, MÉDECIN ET CHIRURGIEN. Reassured, Denis rang the bell.

A maid opened the door. She was sorry, but no, Dr. Levy was not in. Would Denis wait for him? "No, I'll telephone later," Denis said. "What time are you expecting him?"

"He will be back from his surgery at ten o'clock."

Denis was getting slightly nervous about time now, for he was due to rendezvous with Clément, another of our men, in the Bar Sportif in Antibes at noon.

Denis walked down into Cannes. This waiting about between appointments, with nowhere to go, nothing to do, and only the haziest sort of cover story, was always a trial to our men; he wisely passed the time reading all the local and national newspapers on which he could lay his hands, taking particular care not to buy more than two at any one kiosk.

It is one of the most remarkable qualities of the French that they are able to pick out strangers with the greatest facility; the smallest accentual difference, the slightest unfamiliarity with the prevailing slang, is sufficient clue. That is why we liked to drop agents into zones which they knew well; but this was not always possible.

Denis, with his suitcases, felt very conspicuous. He noticed that there was a fair number of uniformed Milice men on patrol; ten o'clock could not come soon enough.

These Miliciens, who wore uniforms aping the S.S., were at this time extremely officious. Most Frenchmen regarded them with cynical derision, but at first they were unable to do anything about them; later, however, when the Resistance took shape and gathered substance, the bumptiousness of the Miliciens changed into a kind of arrogant impotence.

In 1941, however, Vichy was at its most repressive, and we started by under-estimating both the efficiency and the ruthlessness of the Milice. In effect we came to fear them more than the Gestapo or the Abwehr.

Because their agents were Frenchmen, they were able to permeate our organizations with a confidence impossible to the Gestapo, and they had the power, like dry rot, of spreading their corrupting influence among both the discontented and the timid. Thus they could take over whole sub-sections of our organization.

At ten o'clock Denis telephoned Dr. Levy's number.

"Hallo." A woman's voice answered immediately. "I was expecting you to call."

"Good, may I speak——"

"It's about the Siamese cats, isn't it? Well, they're beauties this time and I'm letting them go really quite cheap."

"I want to speak——"

"I know, you're a friend of Yvette's and——"

"Doctor Levy—I want to speak to the doctor——"

"I wish you'd told me," the voice said. "I'll call the doctor. . . ."

"Levy here."

"This is a friend of Grégoire's. I need your help. I wonder"—Denis spaced the words carefully—"do you know where I can buy some good oysters?"

There was a stunned silence. "I beg your pardon?"

"Do you know where I can buy some good oysters?"

"Is this a joke? Oysters? How should I know anything about oysters? Who are you?"

Denis replaced the receiver. In great despondency he caught the bus to Antibes, still carrying the suitcase containing the wireless and the other with the money. If he ran into just one police control point he would have had it.

He reached the bar in Antibes safely. He had been told that Clément would be sitting at a table at the back of the room reading a copy of the *Nice-Matin* and smoking a short black cigar. He would be wearing a beret. Such a man was sitting at the table farthest from the door.

Denis went and sat at the next table. "May I have a look at your paper?" he asked, giving the password. "I left mine on the bus."

The other man replied: "I bought this one in Nice this morning." It was Clément all right. He went on: "I was beginning to wonder whether you were going to turn up. Well, did you have a good trip?"

"Yes, thanks."

"Good stuff. Are we all set to go to Lyons?"

"I think the contact in Cannes has been blown," Denis said. "I phoned him and he didn't know what I was talking about."

"I don't suppose he's been blown. Probably got your wires crossed. I should try to go and see him. Come back here this afternoon. I'm usually here till about three thirty."

There was a casual air about Clément which at once reassured and troubled Denis; it was all very well to find that one's colleague was confident, but was he not lackadaisical also?

Denis was happy to leave—still lugging the two suitcases—and return by bus to Cannes. He started to walk up the road past the station when he saw ahead of him a crowd of people. He stopped in an arcade, on the pretext of tying up his shoelace, and tried to see what was going on. He soon realized; travellers were being forced to open their cases.

Denis walked with leisurely indifference back the way he had come. He turned left down a broad street running parallel to the sea. At the far end of it was a knot of Miliciens, idly patrolling the centre of the road and stopping all who came that way. He turned again and started away from the town centre towards St. Raphael.

He kept walking until, on the outskirts of the town, he found a road which led back to by-pass the town centre. He outflanked the controls and reached the rue de la Sainte-Marie again.

"Doctor Levy cannot see anybody at present," the maid told him. "He is at his surgery."

"May I speak to his wife, then?" Denis asked desperately.

"What name shall I say?"

"Say it is a friend of Yvette's, interested in buying a cat."

Denis found Madame Levy with her kittens in a small shed behind the house. "Madame," he said. "Forgive me for intruding, but I am desperately keen to see Doctor Levy."

"Who are you?"

"I have come from England," Denis said recklessly.

"But you should have been here four days ago," Madame Levy said.

"But when I gave your husband the password he did not understand. Is his phone tapped? Is he in danger?"

"We are always in danger, monsieur," said Madame Levy.

"May I ask you a favour, madame? If I go and see your husband I'm sure he'll know who I am. Meanwhile, may I leave my cases here?"

"All right," she said. "I'll put them at the bottom of the garden."

Denis set off at once. There were several patients in the waiting-room and he joined the queue.

"Next."

Denis rose and went into the surgery.

"Yes, what can I do for you?"

"Doctor Levy, I have been trying to get in touch with you all morning. I phoned you at ten o'clock——"

"Ah, so you're the mysterious stranger who called. Well?"

"I have just come from England." The doctor did not change expression at Denis's words. "I was told your address and the password I gave you——"

"I don't know what you're talking about. I know nothing about it."

"But your wife said you were expecting me."

"We were expecting friends," the doctor admitted cautiously. "But can you prove that you are one of them?"

"The password. . . ."

"Do not keep talking about passwords."

"Perhaps this will convince you," Denis said, pulling from his pocket a small pill-box. In it were two lethal tablets.

The doctor inspected them and looked at Denis. "Very well," he said, slowly removing his glasses in a tired gesture. "Come back here at three o'clock. We will look after you."

Dr. Levy hid Denis Rake in his cellar for six days. . . .

It was not until the second week in March that Rake considered it safe to make the train journey to Lyons, accompanied by Clément and the radio.

They met their contact, a tall, fair-haired woman of striking handsomeness whom they called Renée, in a tiny café on the quai Perrache. She was an S.O.E. agent, one of the first women to work in France for us.

Denis was quartered in a small and grubby hotel near a railway bridge. The *patron* was extremely surly and extremely sleepy and hardly paid any attention to the *fiche*—registration slip—which Denis was obliged to fill in.

Soon Denis was operating his wireless from the various safe houses which Renée was able to arrange through local contacts. One day the *patron* told him: "I am afraid I shall need your room from Monday."

Denis talked to Renée about it. "We should have found you somewhere else before," she said.

Renée met him next day in the place Maréchal-Lyautey, and by this time he was getting very worried, for he had seen the *patron* walking with a member of the Milice. He paid his bill and left.

The wireless set, meanwhile, was hidden in a safe house. The money had been incorporated in the *réseau*—Resistance unit—funds, and Renée had procured him a proper identity card and a *carte de travail* which showed him to be a signal-box operator called Gérard Blanc.

"I must have somewhere for tonight," Denis said.

"It's all right. I've fixed something for you. It isn't very grand, I'm afraid. . . ."

However, Denis was able to continue without snags. He reported back that the railwaymen in one of their sub-groups had perfected a new way of sabotaging trains which was both simple and undetectable; they put grit in the axle-boxes. The trains were able to move on from the sidings only to seize up or burn out miles away, often in open country, blocking the line until they could be shifted.

Ben Cowburn, a determined agent who came from Yorkshire, added to the discomfiture of the Boches by destroying, with his men, several large railway cranes which were the only things capable of moving obstructions from the line.

Our task in London was to link these operations so that they could happen with bewildering simultaneity.

We now started to use the B.B.C.'s French Service for confirming or redirecting the operations of our sections in the field. Innocent messages such as "*Le cheval est dans les betteraves*" would convey to a striking force that they were expected to blow up wireless masts in a particular area.

These messages were sent through the *Messages Personnels* after the news. They were not code messages in the usual sense, for they meant simply that a previous instruction was to be acted upon and did not carry the text of the orders themselves.

The Germans did not know this, at least until much later, and employed a large staff trying to decode messages which in fact were not in code at all—a somewhat arduous and definitely frustrating endeavour. We kept the enemy permanently jittery—and Europe, if not yet ablaze, was certainly beginning to smoulder. . . .

Suddenly we in London heard of an emergency in Lyons. The Milice had started to question Clément's landlady about his movements, and Denis had picked up a "shadow" whom he had the greatest difficulty shaking off.

Denis sent a message to us briefly explaining the critical position. I thought that the best thing would be to recall Clément; he didn't seem to be fitting in with the circuit. But Rake was doing a good job and I decided to tack him on to Xavier in Paris.

Clément got out of Lyons and came back to England through Spain. Denis went to the village of Chalon-sur-Saône, where he hoped to cross the demarcation line into occupied France. He carried 78,000 francs for Xavier.

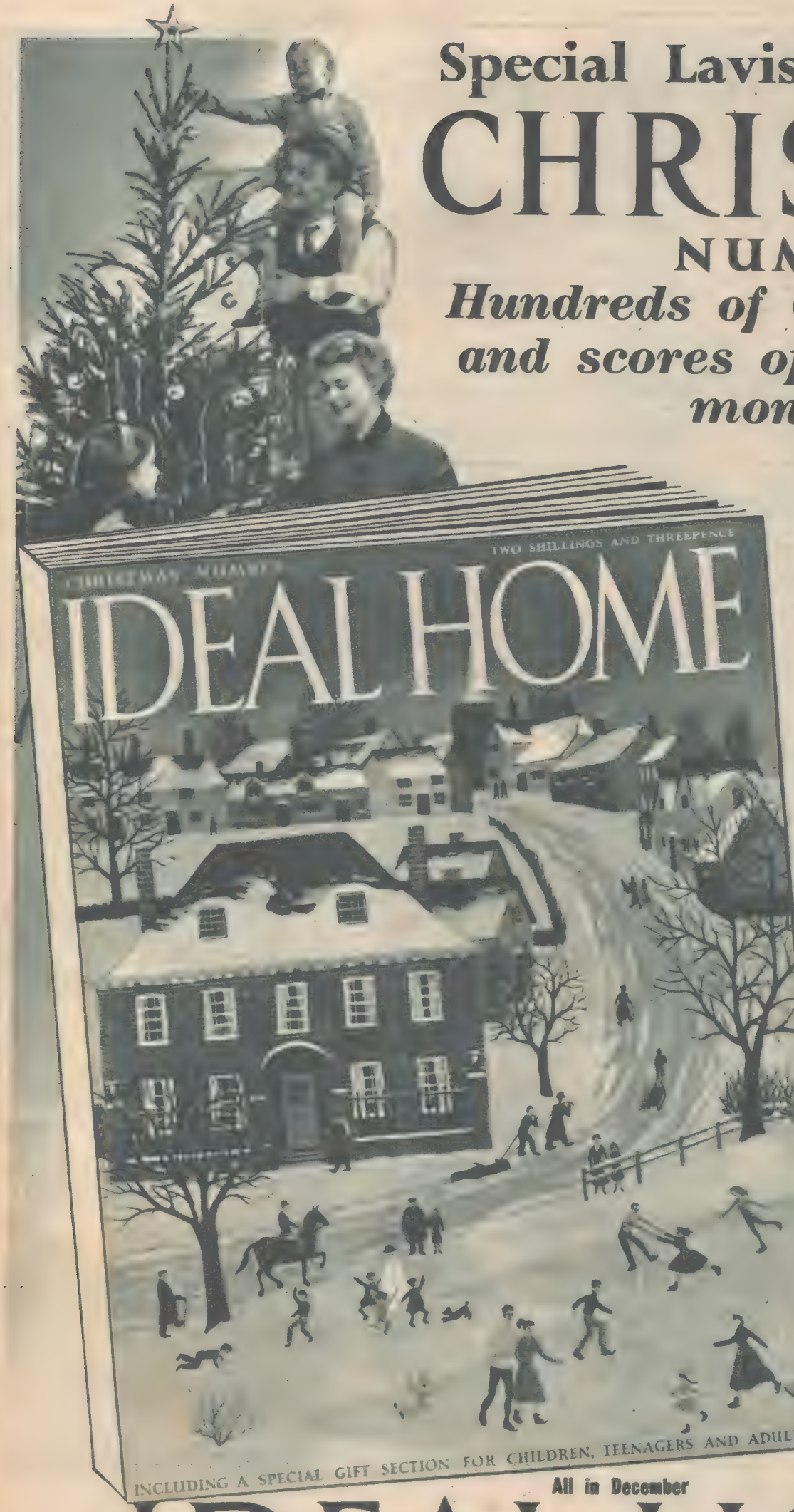
A tiny shop labelled "Jean Aimé—Charbons" was the address given to Denis.

"I rather want to get across into the occupied zone," Denis explained to the owner.

"Be at the farm at the far end of the village at six thirty tomorrow morning."

The arrangements for the frontier crossing—at a cost of two thousand francs—were brisk and business-like.

Denis stayed overnight in an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auberge near the farm. After dinner he talked with a young girl who, he found, was also making the crossing the next morning. Denis said: "If we are stopped, will you tell them that you know that I came south from Paris and am now returning?"

"How could I know that?"

"You could say that we travelled south together."

"I will do what I can," said the girl.

There were nine people in the charcoal van drawn by two horses.

The cart creaked off along the road towards Chalon, then turned off down a rutted track. Most of the travellers seemed to be old friends of Monsieur Aimé, who organized the trip, and they chatted and joked with him quite unconcernedly. Denis and the girl were at the back of the cart, and felt rather out of things.

With dramatic suddenness three German soldiers, under a sergeant, stepped from behind some trees and grabbed at the reins of the horses. "What's going on here?"

"I'm giving some friends a lift," Monsieur Aimé replied with a wink that suggested earlier complicity.

"You know this is strictly forbidden."

Aimé shrugged. He reached inside his pocket and drew out two bars of chocolate and some money. He handed them down to the sergeant, then added a packet of cigarettes and folded his arms.

The sergeant tucked the gifts into his pocket and Monsieur Aimé made to move on. But the sergeant grabbed the reins again. "Not so fast! My officer is getting suspicious. He's getting questions from the C.O. I'm afraid I shall have to ask you for a couple of your passengers again."

To Denis's horror, the driver did not protest. "You can take the two at the back." He jerked his thumb.

The German officers in the interrogation room at the Contrôle Central in Chalon-sur-Saône questioned Denis with great persistence.

"I tell you I came south to see my aunt in Lyons who is sick. I am on my way back to Paris."

"It is quite true, messieurs," said the girl.

"How can you explain all this money you have with you? This aunt of yours—is she very rich as well as ill?" They all laughed. "Is she perhaps also a leading light in the black market as well as being rich and ill?" Again they laughed, and Denis saw that it was best to humour them.

The next morning he appeared in court. "Three weeks," said the magistrate, "and fifteen thousand francs."

Denis spent his three weeks in constant fear that somebody might decide to examine the validity of his papers. But this did not happen, and he was released.

He went straight to Auteuil, where Renée had told him his wireless set would be waiting for him in the house of a Princesse Wilma. The princess's house was a large one set behind a screen of tall trees. A maid opened the door. "The princess is not at home," she announced. "Go away," she added quickly. "Hurry!"

DENIS hurried back into the centre of Paris and treated himself to a large dinner at the Boeuf sur le Toit. As he was having his coffee a new waiter came on duty and headed straight for his table: "Why, Monsieur Rake! What a long time it has been. . . ."

Denis asked this old acquaintance for a safe address, where he could stay the night. The waiter told him to wait on the stairs while he spoke to the *patron*. Then: "This way, sir." He took Denis upstairs and opened the door of a private dining-room. Denis walked in. Sitting alone at the table in the window was an S.S. officer.

Denis spun round, but the door was already shut. The waiter smiled. "It's all right," he said reassuringly. Denis looked back at the S.S. man, who put down his napkin and smiled: "Come and have something to drink."

Apparently the S.S. man was very wretched. Sensitive and artistic, he had found himself, owing to his family connections, recruited into the S.S. in spite of his detestation of Hitler. He said that Denis could stay the night in his flat in the rue de Tilsitt.

In spite of the man's melancholy *bonhomie*, Denis was glad to get away from him the next morning. He made for the Café Napoléon near the Folies-Bergère.

His contact was to be a tall, thickset man with a Roman nose, who was supposed to be there every alternate hour from ten o'clock onwards. But he did not turn up the first four times that Denis went. . . .

Denis had no instructions how to make contact and could think of nothing better than to drop his wallet, containing a picture of another of our Paris agents, called Mountford, at the feet of his contact. With any luck the man would see the photograph and guess who Denis was.

He put this plan into operation when, on his fifth visit to the café, a man answering the proper description came in. As he picked up the wallet the contact glanced at Denis and deliberately blinked.

The contact was Xavier himself, who suggested that Denis should return to Lyons to see what had happened to the missing radio.

Mountford, whose code name was Sebastien, joined them and suggested that they should go at once to Limoges, separately. There they could rendezvous in the unoccupied zone and could operate with greater ease. They agreed to meet at the Hôtel du Faisan in two days' time.

Denis, who still had no papers, again used the method of crossing the frontier favoured by black marketeers. At a railwaymen's café he got in touch with the driver of the night train south. For five thousand francs the driver agreed to smuggle him across the border in the train's fuse-box—a roomy compartment immune from the attentions of the border police.

Denis arrived safely in Limoges and went straight to the Hôtel du Faisan.

That night and the morning of the next day passed without a sign of Xavier and Sebastien. Denis was forced to stay in his room, waiting for them. The landlady came in with her pass-key to find him still there at three in the afternoon. "Are you ill, monsieur?"

"I'm waiting for some friends of mine whom I met on the train."

At that moment there was an imperious ringing at the bell downstairs. Madame hurried away. A few minutes later there were heavy footsteps on the stairs. They halted outside his door. It was the Milice.

"Wait here with him," said the officer in charge to two of his men. "You two come with me. We'll wait downstairs for the others."

Denis was powerless. Half an hour later there was the sound of a brief struggle in the hall. Xavier and Sebastien were shoved into the room.

Denis looked at them and shrugged. To his surprise, they both shot him looks of the greatest hatred. With horror he realized they thought that he had betrayed them.

Later the men were put in separate cells and questioned separately.

"Who are these two men you arranged to meet?" asked Denis's interrogator, an Alsatian called Morrel.

"I met them on the train. I arranged that we should have a drink together."

"Why do you have all this money with you?"

"One needs it these days," Denis replied lamely.

The interrogator looked up suddenly, straight into Denis's eyes. "Tell me," he said, "why are you working for the Germans?"

Denis blinked: "I beg your pardon?"

"Why are you working for the Germans? It's quite obvious, you know. These notes are unpinned. If they had come from a French bank they would certainly have been pinned together at some date. But these"—he held them up to the light—"have never been pinned."

And they say that we paid too much attention to details!

"I am not working for the Germans." Denis decided to take a chance. "I work for the British."

"The British!"

"Look, I and my friends need your help. I can see you are not very fond of the Boches. Will you help us?"

Denis's hunch proved correct, for the man agreed to do what he could.

Two days later Morrel told Denis that he had some bad news for him: Xavier and Sebastien had both been transferred to a prison farther south. But Denis's escape had been arranged, and at once they left the flat for the prison hospital. Here Denis was put into a white gown and shown into a room where a number of out-patients were waiting for X-rays. A door led out to the street, so Denis walked boldly through it—straight into the arms of two Miliciens. He was promptly returned to jail.

The next day a Corsican thug, a member of the Milice, came into the cell and handcuffed Denis. The escorting officer was Morrel. Plainly he had not been suspected of engineering the amateurish escape.

They travelled by train to Lyons, then Denis was led along a row of cells. At last a door was unlocked and he was pushed inside. There were two men in the cell already: Xavier and Sebastien.

They both ignored Denis. Again and again he went through the story of what had happened, of how powerless he had been to warn them both. It was futile. By neither word nor gesture did they acknowledge that they had heard or believed him.

Meanwhile, Sebastien had managed to get on friendly terms with one of the guards, who promised to bring a file in a piece of bread. This old-fashioned deception was discovered by an officer and Sebastien went to solitary confinement—in the next cell to his erstwhile guard.

Xavier, even on his own, continued the unremitting silence.

A week passed and then both Xavier and Denis were transferred to another prison, still in Lyons. Here they were shackled by the feet and left in a dark cell. Denis feared that their treatment would worsen, but suddenly they were taken up to the commandant's office and asked to declare that they had been well treated. Xavier read the piece of paper, glanced at Denis and nodded contemptuously. Both signed.

They were at once given a lavish meal, to which Sebastien was brought. Still the other men refused to speak to Denis. It was a sad celebration. For another month they were kept in the same quarters, then in the last days of October they again met the commandant.

"We have decided to let you go," he said in the tired voice of a man who had had so many conflicting orders that he could not guess what would happen next.

THE three Britons were given a small amount of money and railway warrants to take them south. On November 1, 1942, the prison gates shut behind them. Xavier turned to Denis and said the first words he had addressed to him for the four months they had been together: "Push off."

Denis stared at him, tears in his eyes. By now he hated them for their cruelty as much as they loathed him for his supposed treachery.

"Go on," Sebastien added. "Get out."

Denis turned from them and walked away without a word. . . .

He made for Perpignan. He gambled on the fact that most of the *gendarmerie*, who despised the Milice, were ready to help the Resistance, and so he approached a gendarme officer in a café and asked for his help.

He struck lucky. The commandant, Fette, a man of firm patriotism, took him back to his flat, where two other men on the run were already hiding.

After a week the commandant arranged for the fugitives to be moved towards the Spanish border.

On the night of November 10 they crawled across the bleak frontier near Port Bou. . . .

Rake, so it turned out, had justified my faith in his abilities in spite of the handicap of being rather older than some of our agents, and lacking certain of their qualities.

We now had *réseaux* in several key places including Nice, Marseilles, Bordeaux, Annecy, Lyons, Le Havre, Rouen, Troyes and Lille.

Certain men became responsible for several groups in these early days. Men like Peter Churchill (Raoul) in the south—he was here, there and everywhere, doing the work of ten men—Francis Suttill (Prosper) in Paris, and Robert Heslop (Xavier) in the east

WHY?

ONE evening Frobisher was driving his car fast along a main road. As he rounded a slight bend, he saw a car approaching along a side turning, but he took no further notice of it, assuming that the other driver would let him pass before turning into the main road.

The other car, driven by a young woman, arrived at the junction first, slowing down. To Frobisher's amazement, it did not wait for his car to pass but turned slowly into the main road. There was a collision and both vehicles were badly damaged. Luckily neither driver was badly hurt.

The girl motorist sued Frobisher, alleging that his negligent driving had caused the accident. "My client could not see him coming until it was too late," said her counsel.

"That is not good enough," countered Frobisher's counsel. "My client was on the major road and, therefore, he had the right of the road. The other driver was on a minor road and should have given way. She did not. If anybody has to pay damages, it is she."

But the girl won her case.

WHY? *A barrister explains the judge's ruling on page* 42

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were tremendously valuable, and their dynamism, and that of others like them, held the organization together.

Occasionally we made mistakes in our choice of officers. Early on a chap called Nigel Low was sent to our office by a well-meaning person in another branch of the service. He was a very plausible chap, tall and good-looking, and his plausibility, at first, was very pleasing.

"Of course," he said, "you know all about me, don't you?"

"Yes," I said, smiling, "I know."

Nigel Low was a professional gambler, and not above a spot of confidence trickery. All this I had found out from Scotland Yard, who were always at our service and immensely helpful in a number of ways.

I decided he should be given a chance—he was, after all, a man accustomed to playing a part, and he knew all the tricks of the underworld as far as concealment and bluff were concerned.

"Sounds right up my street," was his comment.

Low went down to the country house which we had commandeered for our training centre and there went through all the courses we had devised.

These courses were very thorough and were based, of course, on the routine "spy school" model. The use of codes, unarmed combat, fieldcraft, shooting, sabotage, methods of contact, and psychological tests were all in the curriculum.

Often I would go down, together with others from headquarters, and they would cross-question recruits, taking on the rôles of Gestapo men in order to try to break their cover stories. By this means their personal stories became ingrained in their minds and they gained some small idea of the rigours of interrogation.

These rehearsals were grim affairs and we spared the recruits very little. They were stripped and made to stand for hours in the light of bright lamps and though, of course, we never used any physical violence on them, they certainly knew what it was to go through it by the time we had finished.

Nigel Low passed all these tests with credit, and in the spring of 1942 he went to France by motor torpedo boat, taking with him some French notes. He reached the Riviera, and from that day to this we have never heard of him again. He had worked his greatest confidence trick. . . .

We learned our lesson with Low and never again employed any of those who, according to many fictional accounts, were qualified by virtue of their underworld lives to carry out espionage.

There was, in the first year or two, considerable confusion in the minds of my superiors about the exact rôle which they wanted S.O.E. to play. At one moment they would doubt the value of having us exist at all, while at another they would ask for more than we could possibly encompass. They demanded miracles, and when they didn't happen became disillusioned.

From the beginning of 1942 onwards —our number of agents had increased from seven to fifty in a year—our activities were greatly increased. We were getting men into France now with much greater confidence.

Co-ordination was vital. We in London had to pass on information about targets, synchronizing the attacks and briefing the different *réseaux* about German dispositions. Then we had to plan the actual operations with a view to doing the maximum harm to the Germans while occasioning a minimum of reprisals against the civilian population.

The planning of an operation—for example, the destruction of a power station—might be done in two ways. Either we would construct a dummy replica of the station and train men especially for the mission, or we would pass the order, together with every detail we could discover about the lay-out, sentries and so forth, to a group already in the field.

At home we had decided to reverse our previous principle of infiltration without sabotage, and when Ben Cowburn, a man of the greatest resource who was still in the field, contacted us in February, we gave him the go-ahead on a plan to blow up some engines used to haul munitions trains from the German border. He had transferred to Troyes, in central France, and had recruited a number of tough helpers from among the railwaymen—also a reception committee to whom we dropped explosives, detonators and small arms.

This drop was one of the first, and presaged the enormous mass drops made later to aid the Maquis.

Ben Cowburn's men had no difficulty placing explosive charges where they could do the most damage and, on the night of February 27, 1942, the engine sheds at Troyes and their contents went up in smoke.

Rehearsals for such operations eventually reached a very high standard. The L.N.E.R. lent us several old engines, and we had the use of a disused branch line in the Midlands to practise our trade. A railway engine is a pretty hardy affair, and it needs exact knowledge of where to put explosive if it is to be put out of service for good.

L.N.E.R. engineers provided that knowledge. We provided the explosives. In the end, the Germans had a large number of engines out of service.

Another time a message filtered through to us from the foreman at an airscrew factory at Figeac. It was a detailed explanation of how an attack could be mounted against the factory.

Our planning officer had a large-scale replica of the factory made, using aerial photographs to supplement the foreman's drawings. Exact to the smallest detail, it almost filled one of the rooms at our briefing flat at Orchard Court.

One of the best men in training at that time, an agent called Nestor, was now brought in. He and an explosives expert, Julien, were to form the nucleus of a team to be recruited in France. They became familiar with the whole lay-out, and adept in the use of plastic explosive. In the next moon period they parachuted into France.

Within two days they had met the foreman and his gang. The foreman was able to smuggle them into a disused storeroom in the factory, until the rest of the workers went home.

The factory was completely blacked out, of course, but their experience with the model now proved its value; Julien and Nestor were able to move through the darkened factory with confidence.

They made their rendezvous with the foreman, who showed them exactly where their explosive would do the most damage—in fact on the valves which connected the power presses with the generating plant. Within minutes the charges were in place and the fuses set.

Nestor and his men left the factory, led by the foreman. Half an hour later the charges went up. The mission was a success.

NEXT WEEK: We break the Germans' grip on Lille

PRAISE—5

The advantage of doing one's praising for oneself is that one can lay it on so thick and exactly in the right places.

Samuel Butler

WHY?

See page 41

BECAUSE, said the judge, there is no such thing in law as "the right of the road." Both drivers are equally bound to take care as they approach a main or side road. The mere fact that Frobisher was travelling on the major road did not mean that he could automatically assume that motorists coming from minor roads would give way to him.

(This ruling is based on actual cases)

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(See "Daily Herald" on Saturday, December 21, for early news of Bullets No. 2,119 result.)

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To End Our Troubles
These Days
Christmas Was Wonderful, But
Macmillan's Headache
If A Slump Comes
A Year To Remember
In The First Space-ship
Good Value
Fighting For Life
Moonshine
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Like A Millionaire
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What Will Win
White As A Sheet
No Joy-ride
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Tug At Her Heartstrings

Last six Examples are incomplete: if you wish to use one, first complete it with a word of your choice—then make your Bullet as usual.

A.....For The World
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Tea And.....
Made Kruschev.....
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